

The Timurid Legacy: A brief history of Timurid Turco-Mongol Clan of Udhyanpur.

Mirza Jahanzeb Beg

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## Foreword

It is with great pleasure and honor that I present to you this book, *The Timurid Legacy: A brief history of Timurid Turco-Mongol Clan of Udhyanpur*, by my friend Mirza Jahanzeb Beg. This book is a remarkable contribution to the field of history, culture, and genealogy, as it traces the origins, achievements, and challenges of the Timurid Mirza Beg lineage, a prominent branch of the Mughal dynasty that ruled over India for more than three centuries.

The author has spent years researching and collecting authentic sources and documents to reconstruct the history of his Timurid ancestors. The result is a comprehensive and captivating account of the Timurid legacy, from its roots in Central Asia, to its establishment and expansion in India, to its migration and settlement in Jammu and Kashmir, and finally to its present-day status and challenges.

The book is divided into many parts, each covering a different aspect of the Timurid legacy. An insightful overview of the Timurid empire, founded by the legendary conqueror Timur, who was the great-great-grandfather of the first Mughal emperor, Babur as well as the focus on the Mughal empire, which reached its zenith under the rule of Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan, and Aurangzeb, and introduced many innovations and reforms in administration, art, architecture, literature, and religion makes it an interesting read.

The book is written in an accessible and engaging style and is not only a valuable resource for historians, academics, and students, but also a fascinating and inspiring read for anyone interested in the Timurid legacy and its relevance for the modern world.

I congratulate Mirza Jahanzeb Beg for his commendable work and dedication, and I thank him for giving me the opportunity to write this foreword. I hope that this book will receive the attention and appreciation that it deserves, and that it will inspire more research and awareness about the Timurid legacy and its contributions to humanity.

Mian Iqbal Salahuddin  
President

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**Mian Iqbal Salahuddin**

Grandson, Sir Allama Mohammad Iqbal

President, Dabistan e Iqbal

Lahore, Pakistan

## **Preface**

With boundless pride and profound gratitude, I humbly present this chronicle, an ardently penned dedication to the cherished memories of my revered late father, Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg, and my esteemed grandmother, Sarva Begum. She was a courageous woman, very passionate, a great storyteller who held aloft the mantle of our lineage with unparalleled pride. Through the enthralling cadence of her storytelling, she painted a glorious picture of our past, that enlivened the lives of our ancestors, eliciting from my young mind a sense of awe and veneration for those who came before us. As a child, I was enraptured by her narratives, their essence igniting an insatiable thirst for knowledge of our roots, and an unwavering devotion to the heritage that imbued my very being.

Her love for our legacy became an infectious force, and under its spell, I embarked on an intrepid odyssey through the annals of history, in pursuit of deeper understanding and profound revelations. The passion she instilled in me became the guiding light that would steer this endeavor towards fruition—a journey of both scholarly exploration and poetic wonder.

In this profound undertaking, I cannot overlook the unwavering support and wisdom bestowed upon me by my dear Mother, Tehmina Akhter. Her presence, profound wisdom, foresight, sacrifices, support and guidance were a bastion of strength for

me throughout my life. She has been a wellspring of encouragement and love, propelling me resolutely forward on this enriching path.

My maternal uncle Naseer Khora, a veteran journalist deserves a special acknowledgement for his role in introducing me to the craft of writing and publishing and for being one of my greatest supporters throughout my academic journey. His encouragement, support and guidance from a very young age fostered my passion for writing and helped me develop the necessary skills and confidence. I sincerely thank my beloved siblings, Zamin Raja and Abroo Jan, who fill my life with joy and happiness, my best friend Dr. Vishvak who is a pillar of support and epitome of goodness and kindness. To TJ for all the unwavering support, love, care and compassion. All of you and your wisdom has adorned the pages of this tome with brilliance and depth, enriching the tales of our ancestry.

A debt of gratitude I owe to the Late Syed Javed Gillani, whose generosity transcended the confines of frail health and advancing years. His vast knowledge and historical references became the compass that guided my quill throughout the writing process. A true custodian of history, he shall forever remain a beacon of inspiration. Without his contribution, this book would have remained incomplete. He departed for heavenly abode soon after the completion of the draft of this book. May his soul rest in peace.



In the wake of my grandmother's passing, my Uncle, Late Mirza Shabir Beg, stepped forth as a fervent storyteller, igniting the embers of my passion with animated narratives of our cherished heritage. This flame, rekindled with renewed ardor, compelled me to bring the storied lives of our ancestors to the forefront of this work, illuminating their essence for generations to come. He too passed away soon after completion of the draft of this book and will be dearly missed. May his soul rest in peace.

To all the people of Udhyampur, I reverently dedicate this book. May the words within these pages breathe life into the annals of your rich history and heritage, instilling a profound sense of pride in your roots and inspiring future generations to rebuild the lost glories of an esteemed past.

Dear reader, I beseech you to accompany me on this sojourn—a voyage through the corridors of time, where the illustrious lives of our forebears unfurl before your very eyes. Let these narratives kindle the same curiosity and appreciation for history that my grandmother instilled within me—the beacon that shall guide our way as we traverse the stories of bygone eras.

Embrace the wisdom and legacy left behind by our ancestors, drawing strength from their courage and indomitable spirit. Together, let us exalt their memory, and through the pages of

this book, endeavor to craft a future that reverberates with  
homage to our cherished past.

With heartfelt gratitude and a fervent commitment to preserving  
history,

Dr. Mirza Jahanzeb Beg

From Timur's ancient tomb  
Light shone, pure.

A voice was heard.  
I am the spirit of Timur!

Chains may hold fast the men of Tartary.  
But God's firm purposes no bonds endure.

Call in the soul of man a new fire to birth!  
Cry a new revolution over the earth!

**- Sir Muhammad Iqbal, Bal-e-Jibril.**

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## **Chapter One: The Timurids and the Udhyanpur Pass**

Nestled within the picturesque expanse of the Chenab Valley, the historic village of Udhyanpur once held a position of remarkable prominence, serving as a geographical, political, strategic, and cultural hub. Today, it may be difficult to envision that this small village, a mere thirty-minute drive from the town of Doda, was once a vital center of activity and influence. This sense of wonder and skepticism is not uncommon and arises from a confluence of factors: the unfortunate neglect of local historical heritage, widespread illiteracy that persisted for much of the past, and a dearth of documentation about the region's history. Compounding these issues is the diminishing interest in traditional forms of learning—such as book reading, exploration, and engaging in conversations with elders—a shift largely attributable to the pervasive distractions of mobile phones and the internet.

I count myself fortunate to have cultivated an interest in sitting with elders, conversing with them, and listening to their stories. These exchanges were not only illuminating but also deeply enriching, offering a unique opportunity to document, record, and even follow up through phone calls when necessary. For me, this process was not just about gathering information—it was a profound cultural and spiritual experience. The oral transmission of history through elders remains one of the most

significant means of preserving cultural heritage, a tradition that fosters a deep connection to the past.

Regrettably, for those whose social lives are largely confined to digital platforms and whose understanding of the world is filtered through Instagram reels and other transient media, it may be difficult to grasp the depth and richness of such an experience. Yet, it is through these face-to-face interactions, rooted in tradition, that the essence of a community's history and spirit truly comes alive, offering insights that no digital medium can replicate.

Before we proceed further, it is crucial for the reader to understand the historical context of the times under discussion. The global governance structures of those eras were fundamentally different from what we know today. Cities were few, and political and economic power often revolved around small reigns centered in villages, agricultural lands, and rural areas. When we examine these small fiefdoms, kingdoms, and reigns situated in what are now perceived as remote or underdeveloped villages, it may evoke surprise—or even a sense of historical and cultural dissonance. Yet, this should remind us of how rapidly the world has evolved through industrial and technological revolutions. Just as we view our ancestors with astonishment, it is plausible that future generations may one day look upon our era with the same mix of awe and curiosity.

Udhyampur was one such village of great historical and strategic importance. Its significance lay in being home to the royal Timurid Mongol Clan, famously known as the Mughals in the Indo-Pak Subcontinent. These families proudly identified themselves as *Khandaan-e-Taimuriyah*, a term chronicled in *Tarikh Khandaan-e-Taimuriyah* by the Mughal Emperor Akbar to emphasize their illustrious Timurid lineage. Between the 16th and 19th centuries, the Mughals ruled much of India, tracing their ancestry to the legendary conqueror Tamerlane (Timur) and, further back, to the great Genghis Khan.

During the height of Mughal influence, a branch of this royal clan migrated from Delhi to Kashmir, eventually shifting their focus to the Kingdom of Kishtwar due to emerging regional political dynamics—a subject to be discussed in greater detail later in this book. Udhyampur, situated along a vital mountain pass leading to Kishtwar, emerged as a critical node in this historical narrative. Its strategic location made it an essential link connecting Kashmir, Kishtwar, and other key regions through the rugged and perilous mountain routes. This geographical significance, combined with the imperial ambitions of the Mughal dynasty, led to the establishment of the renowned Mirza Clan in Udhyampur, forever entwining this unassuming village with the grandeur and legacy of a bygone era.

As the passage of time wove its intricate patterns, the *Khandan-e-Timuriyah*, as the Mirza Beg nobility was known since the era of Emperor Babur, flourished and cemented its standing as influential feudal lords and esteemed regional rulers. Their authority and influence, already deeply entrenched, were further solidified under the Dogra rulers, who not only recognized their status but enhanced it by granting them extensive *jageer* lands. This alliance was further underscored by the conferment of a formidable retinue of one thousand Dogra soldiers, pledged to serve under their command—a legacy whose details unfold in subsequent chapters. The village of Udhyanpur, with its scenic splendor and strategic significance, became a natural seat of power for this illustrious clan, offering both a serene home and a bastion of regional influence.

A deeper exploration of literature and historical records uncovers fascinating layers of Udhyanpur's story. One of the more intriguing aspects pertains to the village's name, which has been illuminated by the scholarship of **Prof. P. N. Pushp**, a distinguished academic born in Srinagar in 1917. Prof. Pushp traced the etymology of "Udhyanpur" to its Sanskrit origins, revealing its poetic meaning. Derived from the Sanskrit word *Udhyān*, which denotes a "garden" or "orchard of exquisite beauty," the name encapsulated the essence of the village. Indeed, Udhyanpur lived up to this illustrious moniker, as its landscapes were a testament to nature's artistry. Fertile soils



nurtured a verdant tapestry of trees, vibrant blossoms, and flourishing orchards, while the air carried the fragrance of fruits and flowers in bloom. The village, with its lush greenery and abundant resources, resembled the celestial gardens of ancient lore, making it not only a strategic stronghold but also a place of enchanting beauty. This harmonious blend of utility and splendor rendered Udhyanpur a fitting symbol of the cultural and historical richness of the era.

**F.M. Hassnain**, in his scholarly work "A Cultural History of Kashmir and Kishtwar," expounds upon Udhyanpur's strategic importance concerning Kishtwar. Historical records trace the genesis of the Kingdom of Kishtwar to the distinguished Kahan Sain (637–67 AD), succeeded by the astute Bhoja Sain, who diligently organized his military forces. To fortify his dominion, Bhoja Sain established military outposts at crucial passes, with Udhyanpur being one of the noteworthy bastions, along with Naqasain, Kunwartha, Banjai, Sharor, and Jhakrai.

Further insight into the village's historical legacy comes from the late Block Development Officer (BDO) **Ghulam Mustafa**, whose work "Tareekh Kishtwar" recounts a poignant incident involving the apprehension of the King of Mahlah by Dogra Commanders. It was within this narrative that the Mirza Amirullah Beg of Udhyanpur assumed a prominent role, exercising judicial authority in the region. He is mentioned to have carried out the execution of the monarch of Arnora

Village, albeit, the context is not clear whether it was due to some feud or this horrible fate was invited by the monarch himself for injustices carried out by the him against the peasantry which invited the justice. Multiple narratives exist and it's hard to ascertain which one is correct.

There is ample historical record that bears testimony to the military prowess and strategic acumen of this Timurid settlement, especially for having produced esteemed military generals and commanders with brilliant military acumen suitable for complex and prolonged warfare. Unfortunately, this curse of warfare looms in the generations and the Timurid are known for their extreme nature, both when it comes to compassion or violence. Regardless, it makes a lot of sense that their martial expertise would have garnered them a privileged position with the ruling elites, in their case, with Maharaja Gulab Singh, a notable ruler of state, who bestowed the region of Udhyanpur upon the esteemed clan through a copper plate charter known as the “Patta”. The Maharaja recognized the clan's invaluable contributions to his military campaigns and sought to harness their martial prowess in the pursuit of imperial expansion.

### **An Alternative Oral Account of the Timurid Settlement**

An alternative oral narrative offers a different perspective on the settlement of the Timurid nobility in Udhyanpur, woven

into the region's folklore and familial recollections. According to these sources, the roots of their establishment are traced to a dramatic and turbulent episode in their storied history: the assassination of Mirza Haider Beg, a distinguished figure in the Timurid noble hierarchy. This tragic event marked a turning point, leaving the lineage exposed and vulnerable to the dangers often associated with their illustrious heritage.

The perilous existence of the Timurids did not end there. Even under British rule, they were relentlessly pursued, hunted, and subjected to exile or execution—not only by the colonial authorities but also by other monarchs. The fear was that these descendants of a once-mighty dynasty might reclaim lands, incite rebellion, or disrupt the fragile political balance of the era. The noble families found themselves trapped between their illustrious past and the oppressive realities of a world that saw their heritage as both a threat and a burden.

Fearing persecution and seeking refuge from the specter of further violence, the Timurids dispersed across the subcontinent in search of safety. For one branch of the lineage, this quest led them to the serene and strategically situated village of Udhyampur. Oral traditions suggest that the site was chosen not merely for its beauty but for the promise of sanctuary it offered—a respite from the ceaseless bloodshed and strife that had shadowed their history.

In Udhyanpur, the family established a small principality locally referred to as a *Raajwada*—a fortified residence that served as a symbol of their resilience and adaptability. This structure was more than a home; it was a testament to their determination to preserve their legacy amidst upheaval. While the grandeur of their imperial ancestry faded into memory, their settlement in Udhyanpur became a chapter of survival and reinvention, embodying the enduring spirit of the Timurid lineage in the face of historical adversity.

Initially intended as a temporary abode, the village soon became the epicenter of their existence, eventually evolving into a permanent settlement that has endured through the annals of time. The motivation behind this adoption can be understood through the prism of the prevailing historical context. In a world governed by political intrigue, alliances, and power struggles, noble lineages were often embroiled in deadly rivalries. With each faction seeking to assert its dominance, the risk of assassination and intimidation was ever-present. Faced with such a precarious reality, it is not difficult to fathom the allure of establishing a sanctuary far from the machinations of their adversaries. Udhyanpur offered a semblance of security - the steep mountains and dense forests acting as bulwarks against external threats. Within these fortified confines, the lineage could find temporary respite from the ceaseless turmoil.

Over time, the significance of Udhyanpur transcended its role and became a cultural and social nucleus, fostering a sense of community among its inhabitants. The settlement's transformation into a permanent establishment can be attributed to various factors. The passage of time undoubtedly played a significant role in cementing its place as a thriving village. Generations of the lineage lived and prospered within its confines, fostering a sense of belonging that extended beyond their ancestral roots. Indeed, the transformation of the settlement into a permanent establishment did not diminish its significance as a center of political discourse. On the contrary, the settlement's stature grew as it maintained strong ties with the ruling Dogra dynasty. The Mirza family, despite seeking refuge from the uncertainties of their noble lineage, found themselves intricately woven into the political fabric of the region.

The Dogra rulers recognized the historical prominence of the Mirza family and acknowledged their ties and contribution to the realm. The enduring connection between the Dogra rulers and the Mirza family ensured that the settlement remained an influential force in the political landscape. General Zorawar Singh, a renowned figure in the Dogra administration, held the Mirza family in high regard, further solidifying their position of influence.

The symbiotic relationship between the Mirza family and the Dogra rulers went beyond mere recognition and cordial ties. The Mirza family, as they settled into their newfound abode, retained a significant contingent of Dogra soldiers under their command. This arrangement, with 1000 Dogra soldiers standing by their side, exemplified the trust and mutual benefits that existed between the two entities. Other than this family, there were two more prominent commanders, one from Kishtwar and one from Baghwah village of Doda, details will follow. The settlement's position as a nexus of political power was further fortified by the Mirza family's continued presence and active involvement in the affairs of the region. As the settlement flourished and evolved into a vibrant community, it also became a center for political deliberations and decision-making. The lineage, having found a haven from the adversities of noble lineage, now had the opportunity to actively participate in the governance and politics of the larger domain.

A sojourn into the annals of Udhyanpur uncovers a captivating narrative, unveiling layers of history that continue to intrigue historians and enthusiasts alike. The Timurid Mongol Clan indelibly imprinted its legacy upon the region, leaving an enduring mark of valor, sagacity, and unyielding spirit. As the sands of time flow ceaselessly, the village of Udhyanpur remains an eloquent testament to its storied past, inviting inquisitive minds to partake in the rich tapestry of its historical journey.

**Professor Dutta**, a distinguished chronicler of historical events, expounds upon Zorawar Singh Kahluria's strategic wisdom in selecting Kishtwar as his base of operations. This decision arose from his keen awareness of the region's high terrain and altitude, ideal for training his troops in preparation for military campaigns to Ladakh, Baltistan, Zansar, and ultimately Tibet. Amidst these endeavors, Zorawar Singh paid a momentous visit to Fareed Abad Doda, where he encountered the spiritual luminary, Haji Akram Sahib, seeking his blessings. Zorawar Singh advanced through Nagini and Keshvan, Mirza Rusul Beg's presence in Udhyampur, Doda, turned the region into a fervent arena of political discourse.

At that time, the Village of Nagri predominantly housed the Harijan Hindu population, relying primarily on agriculture for their livelihoods. They found themselves under the influence of the dominant Rajputs of Bhagwah, esteemed feudal lords in the area. An intriguing facet of Nagri's history emerges as the Rajput Thakur Family of the village held a familial connection to Hazrat Shah Fareed ud Din Baghdadi, revered as the Patron Saint of the Chenab Valley Region. Shah Sahab's union with Beeg Sahab, a member of the Rajput family, transpired during his visit to Kishtwar in the Reign of Shah Jahan, with further details to be expounded in subsequent chapters.

Historical records reveal that the Zamindars of Nagri village extensively cultivated poppy, producing Khashkhash (poppy

seeds) and Aafin (Opium). Concurrently, the village of Birshala, situated in the upper region, housed a predominantly Muslim populace, comprising migrant families from Kashmir. During that time, the village of Doda suffered from poverty. The businesses and transportation were facilitated from Puldoda to upper Doda through donkeys. The availability of public transport was limited and businessmen would carry their rations and merchandise from Puldoda to sell in Doda on donkeys. A well-to-do family owned a donkey, a prosperous one would own two, respectively. These donkeys served as the primary means of transporting goods and agricultural produce from Puldoda to Upper Doda due to a lack of proper road connectivity. The once mighty fort constructed by the Dogras in the lower region of Doda has, in recent times, been dismantled by governmental authorities, giving way to a school called City Middle.

According to Professor Dutta, Mirza Rusul Beg commanded a troop of one thousand Dogra forces, and he was not alone in this venture. The Rajput noble Bhagwan Singh of Village Bhagwah, Doda, led another contingent of five hundred soldiers, while Imam Din of Tehsil Kishtwar commanded a further five hundred Dogra soldiers. These forces played instrumental roles in the various military expeditions.

Scholarly evidence corroborated by **Prof. Sukhdev Singh Charak** in his authoritative work, "General Zorawar Singh,"



attests to the conquest of Baltistan under the command of Mirza Rusul Beg. In these conquests, the Baltis were left demoralized, and, as **A.H. Frangle** writes, they wisely opted for silent submission. Zorawar Singh continued to consolidate his positions, settling affairs in Skardu before plotting his campaign against other local chiefs. In the pursuit of victory, he sent around one thousand Dogras under the capable leadership of Mirza Rusul Beg. In the ensuing events, the fort of Rondu was captured without resistance.

Mirza Rusul Beg played a pivotal role in the subjugation of Baltistan, notably capturing the fort of Rondu without resistance. This swift victory demoralized the local chiefs and significantly aided Zorawar Singh in consolidating his power in Skardu. However, Mirza Rusul Beg's greatest challenge — and ultimate glory — awaited him in the perilous campaign against Tibet, where he followed his ambitious general with unwavering zeal and courage.

In 1841, after successfully subduing Ladakh and Baltistan, General Zorawar Singh resolved to extend his conquests into Tibet. Mirza Rusul Beg strongly advised against this dangerous venture, warning him of the severe cold, the vast and treacherous distances, and the formidable resistance they would face in Tibet's highlands. Yet Zorawar Singh, emboldened by his past victories and blinded by ambition, dismissed his friend's prudent counsel. Despite his initial hesitation, Mirza Rusul Beg ultimately joined the expedition — a decision that

would place him at the heart of one of the most challenging campaigns of his time. As Zorawar Singh contemplated the conquest of Tibet, Mirza Rusul Beg, though initially hesitant, eventually participated for two significant reasons. Firstly, he sought to complete the unaccomplished expedition undertaken by the notable Timurid Mughal conqueror, Mirza Haider, adding a sense of valor and accomplishment to his military legacy. Secondly, as a matter of honor, he refused to back down, determined to prove his mettle despite the challenges of waging warfare amidst Tibet's treacherous winter conditions. In response to Mirza Rusul Beg's wise counsel, Zorawar Singh, displaying his characteristic wit and overconfidence, jocularly remarked, "Mirza, have you begun to long for the sweet water of Trumnaal Naag?"

In this bantering exchange between Zorawar Singh and Mirza Rusul Beg, the former's jesting retort concealed a profound stubbornness and fervent determination that characterized his persona. Unyielding in his pursuits and ardently passionate, Zorawar Singh was quick to dismiss Mirza Rusul Beg's considered concerns as a mere whimsical yearning for peaceful days amidst his gardens in Udhyanpur. However, the spirited military commander, Mirza Rusul Beg, proved equally resolute, refusing to yield an inch in safeguarding his reputation as a skilled and valorous warrior.

The jesting remark undoubtedly struck a chord within Mirza Rusul Beg, for he, too, possessed an egoistic demeanor, cherishing his honor and military prowess above all else, akin to any distinguished military commander. Driven by this innate pride and an unyielding devotion to his duty, he responded emphatically, "If that is what you believe, so be it. I shall fight and face the Wine of Martyrdom if necessary."

Mirza Rusul Beg's determination and unwavering commitment to upholding his honor were of paramount significance to him, influencing his resolve to embark on this treacherous conquest despite the foreboding challenges posed by Tibet's formidable terrain and winter conditions. As a consummate military commander and warrior, Mirza Rusul Beg held his honor and reputation in the highest regard, mirroring the traits of many great leaders of the past. This potent combination of ego, honor, and unwavering loyalty shaped his destiny, driving him forward with determination, courage, and, as events would unfold, an enduring legacy.

Ultimately, Zorawar Singh's impulsive decision to embark on this ambitious expedition during the approach of winter proved detrimental. Despite sweeping victories across Hanle, Taklakot, Rudok, Gartok, and Mantalai-Mansarovar, the army encountered severe challenges due to the impassable mountain passes and harsh winter conditions. Frostbite afflicted a significant portion of the troops, rendering them ill-equipped to

face the Tibetan army's might. Nevertheless, the indomitable spirit of the expedition led to the successful capture of Tibet until Mayum Pass.

According to local accounts, a mystic residing in the serene ambiance of Jamia Masjid in Udhyanpur was known for his contemplative practices and meditative pursuits. During one of his introspective moments, the mystic surprisingly summoned the relatives of Mirza Rusul Beg and conveyed a solemn message. He foresaw the unfortunate martyrdom of the esteemed military commander. With unwavering conviction, the mystic shared the specific date, time, and venue where the fateful event would unfold.

Despite being cautioned about the repercussions if his prophecy proved false, the mystic remained composed, asserting his willingness to accept any consequences should his words prove inaccurate. In due course, upon the return of soldiers from the battlefield, the mystic's prophecy found confirmation. The precise details he had foretold were validated, leaving a lasting impression on the villagers, who marveled at this seemingly uncanny occurrence. Such enigmatic incidents, suffused with mysticism and premonition, often evoke a sense of wonder and reverence among communities.

The Mirza Clan, a distinguished lineage of valiant warriors and commanders, enjoyed a privileged status and a vast estate,

conferred upon them by Maharaja Gulab Singh in recognition of their meritorious military service.

A curious tale is told about the warriors of Apor Gaam, a small settlement on the edge of Udhyanpur. These brave men had accompanied Mirza Rusul Beg on his daring invasion of Tibet, where they endured great hardships and dangers.

Upon their return from the campaign, the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, who had sponsored the expedition, asked them what reward they desired for their valor.

To his surprise, the warriors of Apor Gaam did not ask for land or estates, which were the customary rewards for such deeds. Instead, they requested clothes, rugs, and garments, which they desperately needed after enduring the cold and harsh winter of Tibet. The Maharaja granted their wish, but this unusual request earned them a mocking nickname: *Langot Mirzas*, meaning "the loincloth princes."

The *langot*, a simple and humble garment worn by wrestlers and ascetics, stood in stark contrast to the rich and lavish attire of the nobility.

Thus, the residents of Apor Gaam became known as the *Langot Mirzas* — a name that reflected both their modesty and the lingering trauma of war.

## **The Impact of Shaikh Abdullah's Agrarian Reforms**

The eminent Mirza family's extensive Jageer, bestowed upon them by Maharaja Gulab Singh, stood as a befitting acknowledgment of their invaluable military contributions. However, the dawn of a new era brought forth a transformative agrarian reform program under the administration of then Prime Minister Shaikh Muhammad Abdullah in 1948. This sweeping reform led to the abolition of Jagirs, Muafis, and Mukkararies, profoundly impacting the once formidable estates of the Mirza Clan and drastically affecting their fortunes and holdings. Despite the significant repercussions of these reforms, the Mirza families retained a substantial degree of influence and sway within the region.

The Jagirdari system, while experiencing a notable reduction in scale, persisted, ensuring that remnants of their erstwhile prominence endured. Within the sanctuary of their ancestral abode, the family carefully preserves the copper plate, known as the Patta, meticulously documenting the conferment of the cherished Jageer. This historical artifact serves as an enduring reminder of the family's noble heritage, bearing witness to the time-honored association with the ruling elites of that time.

However, the vicissitudes of time and the relentless forces of nature proved unkind to one of the family's most treasured possessions. The once resplendent multistory building with its

Deewankhana, once a symbol of regality and reverence, ultimately succumbed to the ravages of both time and an unforgiving snowfall in 2005. This poignant event marks a profound chapter in the family's history, reflecting the transient nature of human endeavors and the ever-evolving course of history.

## **Chapter Two: Unraveling the Glorious Past of the Mirza Beg Nobility.**

he title *Mirza* signifies a noble lineage with deep historical roots. It originates from the Persian term *Amīrzādeh*, which literally means "child of the Amir" or "child of the ruler." *Amīrzādeh* combines the Arabic title *Amir*, meaning "commander," with the Persian suffix *zādeh*, meaning "son of" or "lineage of."

The title *Mirza* first emerged in the 15th century as a mark of respect for members of the Timurid dynasty, who traced their ancestry to the Central Asian conqueror Timur, who held *Amir* as his principal title. In the early Timurid period, *Mirza* was traditionally placed before a prince's given name, following the Persian naming convention. However, over time, the Turkish custom of positioning the title after the name became more prevalent.

In the Indo-Pak subcontinent, the prefix *Mirza* became closely linked with the princes of the Mughal Royal Family, signifying their noble descent and direct lineage from the Timurid heritage. Initially reserved for kings and princes, it was adopted as part of one's name to reflect a connection to the Mughal dynasty.



On the other hand, the title of "Beg" finds its origins in the Turkish language. It served as an honorific designation for chieftains and esteemed leaders. Throughout history, "Beg" was bestowed upon individuals with special lineages connecting them to leaders or rulers in diverse Turkic kingdoms, emirates, sultanates, and empires across Central Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East. Prominent examples include the Timurids, Ottomans, as well as various khanates and emirates in the Eurasian Steppe.

The feminine equivalent of "Beg" was "begum," a title of equal prestige and honor used by noble women. In addition to "begum," some women of nobility also held the title of "Khanum," which denoted a female royal or aristocratic figure akin to the male title "Khan," used for sovereigns or military rulers. Given the Turko-Mongol origin of the Timurid Mughals, the titles of "Mirza" and "Beg" held profound significance. By adopting both as a prefix and suffix to their names, the Timurid Mughals emphasized their illustrious Noble Lineage and the enduring legacy of their Turko-Mongol heritage, reflecting the grandeur and eminence of their ancestral heritage.

During the period from Akbar's reign to that of Aurangzeb, the Mughals held sway over the region of Kashmir, and some Mughal families chose to settle there, captivated by the region's breathtaking beauty. Among these families was the illustrious Timurid Mughal lineage, and a prominent figure from this

lineage was Mirza Haider Ali Beg. He assumed control of Kashmir on behalf of Emperor Humayun and governed the region from 1540 to 1551 until he met his martyrdom on the battlefield, resting eternally in Goristan e Shahi, Srinagar.

Remarkably, Mirza Haider Ali Beg was Emperor Babur's maternal cousin and authored the esteemed historical work, "Taareekh e Rashidi." Mirza Haider Ali Beg shared familial connections to the esteemed Mirza Beg nobility, with certain oral sources alluding to him as their forebear.

With their prestigious Timurid Mughal heritage, the Mirza Beg nobility garnered immense respect and admiration in the region. The family, deeply rooted in their illustrious lineage, added a touch of grandeur to Udhyanpur, leaving an indelible mark on its historical tapestry. Their association with the Mughal royal lineage, exemplified by Mirza Haider Ali Beg's familial ties, further enriched their standing, elevating them to a position of prominence within the cultural and social fabric of the region. Udhyanpur became a focal point of intellectual, cultural, and social exchange, attracting esteemed personalities from near and far to partake in the splendor of this exceptional family. Their legacy, interwoven with the historical narrative of the region, served as a source of inspiration and admiration for generations to come, cementing their place as esteemed custodians of heritage and refinement.

The Mughals, during their rule, were instrumental in constructing numerous splendid gardens in the picturesque landscapes of Kashmir, significantly enhancing the region's development. While several small rajwadas (kingships) existed in the area, none quite matched the eminence and influence of this distinguished lineage, the Mirza sahiban, who occupied an esteemed position within the elite class of the region.

The Mirza family's close ties with Maharaja Gulab Singh, a prominent figure in the Dogra dynasty, were instrumental in securing robust support from the Dogra rulers. As a testament to their influence, the family commanded a formidable army of one thousand Dogra soldiers, further consolidating their prominence and authority within the region.

### **Deewan Khana:**

Intriguingly, the residence of the Mirza family was an expansive three-story structure adorned with intricate wooden craftsmanship, executed by skilled Kashmiri artisans, a craftsmanship that regrettably is no longer prevalent. A notable feature of the building was its grand *deewankhana*, a hall reserved for hosting guests, which frequently welcomed visitors and guests of the royal family.

The ceiling of the *deewankhana* was a remarkable example of the artistic fusion of woodwork and *papier-mâché*, a technique

that originated in Persia and was introduced to Kashmir by Shah Hamdan, later flourishing under Mughal influence.

The *khatamband* ceiling was divided into several panels, each featuring a distinct geometric or floral pattern, creating a captivating visual effect. The panels were crafted from deodar wood, a durable and aromatic timber native to the Himalayas. The wood was intricately carved and then coated with a layer of *papier-mâché*—a mixture of paper pulp, glue, and chalk.

The *papier-mâché* was painted in vibrant colors and adorned with gold leaf, creating a striking contrast with the dark wood. It also added a smooth, glossy finish to the ceiling, enhancing its elegance. The ceiling stood as a testament to the skill and creativity of Kashmiri artisans, who had preserved and perfected this art form for centuries.

Indeed, it was the only deewankhana in the entire region, attesting to the family's exceptional status. The family's abode housed a substantial storehouse, storing an array of formidable weaponry, ranging from swords, shields, and knives to clubs, bows, arrows, and rifles, attesting to their martial prowess and preparedness for warfare.

Given their eminent standing, the Mirzas welcomed a diverse array of influential personalities, ranging from rulers and generals to religious scholars and revered saints, who

recognized and admired the family's significant contributions to the region's history and culture.

### **Lavish lifestyle of Men and Women:**

The Timurids of Udhyampur led a life befitting their royal lineage, marked by grandeur, luxury, and cultural refinement. Women of the family traveled in lavishly adorned Palkis (palanquins), a symbol of their elevated status and prestige, sparing them from the need to journey on foot. Their love for equestrian pursuits was evident in their ownership of numerous horses, meticulously housed in a well-appointed stable in Doda.

The family's men were prominent figures, often embarking on journeys to Delhi and Lahore to reunite with family and maintain connections with their relatives. Despite the prevailing poverty and illiteracy in the Doda district, the family remained well-informed and intellectually engaged, availing themselves of newspapers and books sourced from Lahore. Their active contributions to magazines and weeklies further demonstrated their commitment to literature and intellectual discourse.

One of the key sources of information was the Urdu newspaper *Zameendar*, a prominent voice for Indian Muslims in the 1920s. Its founding editor, Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, was a renowned journalist, poet, and politician who strongly advocated for Muslim rights and interests under British colonial

rule. The newspaper was regularly sent to Udhyanpur, where it was received by Mirza Gulam Rasool Beg, an avid reader. A copy of the newspaper sent to him is still preserved as a historical record by his son, Mirza Muzaffar Beg. Besides that, there was a great library containing rare books such as *Gulistan*, *Boston*, *His Hasten*, *Door Mukhtar*, and rare manuscripts on *Tassawuf* (Islamic mysticism), *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), philosophy, and other sciences, collected from the Kashmiri Bazaar in Lahore. Many of these works are still preserved, but the library was burned down during the militancy era by rogue elements when the home of Muzaffar Beg was set on fire due to his affiliation with the Indian National Congress.

Endowed with physical prowess and valor, the men of the clan were skilled warriors, well-versed in the arts of combat and warfare. However, they also relished a life of comfort and pleasure, embracing the pleasures afforded by their privileged status. The family's domain encompassed not only the captivating gardens and fertile lands of Udhyanpur but extended to the villages of Kalihand, Kulhand, Anchakri, Batlegi, Khoonu, and neighboring areas, consolidating their influence in the region.

### **Religious Court and Justice**

The Timurids of Udhyanpur held considerable authority and influence over the *kashtkars* (peasantry) who cultivated the

lands in the region. The *kashtkars* paid tribute and showed deference to the noble family by entering the premises of Udhyanpur barefoot as a mark of respect.

The family also administered justice according to the principles of Islamic law, presiding over a Court of Law (*Adaalat*) where disputes and crimes were adjudicated. Capital punishment was carried out at a designated tree, known in Kashmiri as *Fainsi Kull*, where condemned criminals faced execution.

### **Prominent Figures of the Mirza Family of Udhyanpur**

The Mirza family of Udhyanpur produced several distinguished figures who left a lasting legacy in the fields of military and literature. Among them, **Mirza Rasul Beg** stands out as a formidable military commander and warrior. Leading an army of one thousand soldiers, he secured decisive victories in conflicts against Ladakh and displayed remarkable valor in battles fought in Tibet. His commanding physical presence and dignified stature earned him widespread respect, and he enjoyed the patronage and support of Maharaja Gulab Singh and General Zorawar Singh Katoria, two towering figures of the Dogra dynasty.

Another notable member of this Timurid Mughal lineage was **Mirza Amirullah Beg**, whose reputation was shaped by a dramatic and consequential act of justice. According to oral

sources, Amirullah Beg is said to have beheaded the King of Mahlah for inflicting severe oppression and injustice upon his subjects. While the precise circumstances surrounding this action remain undocumented in historical records, the act itself cemented his legacy as a figure of retributive justice within the region's historical narrative.

The Mirza family's legacy was not confined to the battlefield alone; it extended into the realm of literature and cultural refinement. **Mirza Sikandar Beg**, another prominent figure, was renowned for his striking beauty and charismatic demeanor, which earned him admiration from both nobles and poets. His allure caught the attention of **Rusul Mir Shahabadi**, the celebrated romantic poet from Shahabad in the Anantnag District, often regarded as the John Keats of Kashmir. Enchanted by Sikandar Beg's captivating presence, Rusul Mir Shahabadi composed a poem extolling his beauty and noble character, elevating Sikandar Beg to a near-mythic status in Kashmiri poetic tradition. One of the verses reads:

*"Haa Saraazo, Puiiri Naazo, Yuer Walo"*

("Ah, man of Saraz, with grace and pride, come to my side.")

The verses immortalized Sikandar Beg's elegance and noble bearing, securing his place in Kashmir's poetic and cultural heritage. His charm and refined presence transcended his



lifetime, becoming eternally enshrined in the region's literary legacy.

The lineage of the Mirza family extended through the generations. Mirza Gadaye Beg had two sons, Mirza Ahad Beg and Mirza Zorawar Beg. Mirza Ahad Beg, in turn, had three children: Mirza Wazir Beg, Mirza Sikandar Beg, and a daughter named Mughlani. This interwoven lineage of warriors, statesmen, and cultural figures reflects the profound influence of the Mirza family on the historical and cultural fabric of Udhyanpur. Their legacy, shaped by military valor and artistic sophistication, remains an enduring testament to the historical tapestry of the region.

**Mirza Zorawar Beg** was a towering figure both in stature and reputation. Renowned for his imposing physical presence and muscular build, he inspired awe and fear in those who encountered him. His strength and courage earned him comparisons to a lion, a metaphor immortalized in a Qaseedah (a form of poetic tribute) composed by a respected Qadiri Saadaat Peer from Magam. The Qaseedah, which praised Zorawar Beg's bravery and nobility, was preserved in the library of Retired Chief Librarian Syed Javed Gilani, who had committed the poem to memory. However, by the time Gilani reached his nineties, only fragments of the poem remained in his memory, and the original manuscript was lost,

depriving posterity of the complete work. The surviving lines of the Qaseedah read:

*"Ghazanfar        Haibat        o        Mirza        Zorawar"*  
(A lion in majesty—Mirza Zorawar)

Despite the loss of the complete poem, the poetic homage to Zorawar Beg endures as a lingering echo of his legacy, preserved in the fading memories of the Gilani Sadaat of Magam. Zorawar Beg's life was one of opulence and grandeur. He frequently traveled to Lahore with a caravan of forty servants, all maintained at his own expense, reflecting his considerable wealth and influence. His personal life was marked by complexity and controversy, particularly concerning his marriages. Zorawar Beg had three wives from diverse cultural and social backgrounds. One of his wives was a Hindu Pandit woman from a family of shepherders, known locally as "Gaddi" (derived from Gadariya). His second wife hailed from a village near Anczakri, and his third wife came from Udhyampur, belonging to the distinguished Beg clan of Aporgaam. From his third marriage, he had two sons: Mirza Ghulam Rasool Beg and Mirza Madaan Beg. Ghulam Rasool Beg later became a postmaster by profession.

Zorawar Beg's marriage to the Hindu Pandit woman caused considerable communal tension in the region. According to

local legend, Zorawar was captivated by a melodious voice while riding his horse during a journey to Lahore.

Following the sound, he discovered a Hindu girl of remarkable beauty, whom he later married. This union provoked discontent within the Hindu community, leading to a formal complaint filed with the authorities in Udhampur. A police party, led by a DSP-ranked officer known locally as a "Kumaidan," was dispatched to arrest Zorawar at his residence, then called "Mirza Dera" (now known as Astan Mohalla). The officers found Zorawar resting beneath a Lilac tree (locally called "Drek"). However, when they attempted to restrain him, the handcuffs failed to fit his large wrists. Awakened by the commotion, Zorawar's intimidating presence and fierce reaction terrified the officers, causing them to retreat in panic. Mirza Zorawar Beg's life, marked by strength, wealth, and defiance, remains etched in the collective memory of the region. His legacy, intertwined with poetic homage, legendary encounters, and social complexity, continues to resonate through the oral and historical traditions of Udhyanpur.

**Ghulam Mohiuddin Beg**, also known as Mahad Beg, was the younger brother of Mirza Zorawar Beg and a distinguished figure in the religious and intellectual circles of his time. Renowned for his piety and profound knowledge of religious texts, Mahad Beg was well-versed in Arabic, Persian, Urdu, and Kashmiri.

His scholarship extended to classical Islamic jurisprudence and Sufi literature, including seminal works such as *Durr-e-Mukhtar* (a major text on Hanafi jurisprudence), *Fatawa Alamgiri* (a compendium of Islamic law commissioned by Emperor Aurangzeb), and Sufi classics like *Masnavi* (by Rumi), *Gulistan*, and *Bostan* (by Sa'di).

Mahad Beg's intellectual pursuits were enriched by his extensive travels to the cultural and political hubs of the Mughal Empire—Lahore and Delhi—where he acquired a rare collection of Islamic manuscripts. Many of these valuable texts have been preserved by his descendants at the family estate, Mirza Dera, in Doda. Among the treasured heirlooms is a copper plate that bears testimony to the noble lineage and martial heritage of the Mirza family. This artifact remains in the custody of Dr. Mirza Eijaz Beg, one of Mahad Beg's grandsons.

Mahad Beg was not only a scholar but also a respected public figure. He actively engaged with the intellectual and religious community through his writings, contributing regularly to various newspapers and magazines received from Lahore. His command over multiple languages allowed him to engage with diverse audiences, strengthening his influence in both religious and social spheres. His leadership was further recognized when he was appointed President of the Anjuman Islamia, a

prominent religious and social organization in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Mirza family, maintaining its high social standing, traditionally preferred endogamous marriages within the community. However, they were open to intermarriage with other castes, though their daughters were rarely married to outsiders. Mahad Beg's wife, Khumnaii, belonged to the respected Ganai family of Dulyog, a neighboring village. Mahad Beg's life met a tragic end in Kishtwar, where he was working as a contractor. Conflicting accounts surround his death, but one widely held version suggests that he was poisoned by some of his workers, who harbored a personal grudge against him. His untimely death marked a sorrowful chapter in the Mirza family's history, yet his scholarly contributions and spiritual legacy continue to resonate within the family and the broader intellectual traditions of the region.

**Mirza Ghulam Mustafa Beg**, the author's grandfather, was a prominent figure in Udhyanpur, known for his leadership, business acumen, and martial prowess. As a successful businessman, contractor, and village head, he commanded considerable respect within his community. Mustafa Beg was also an accomplished hunter, owning an imported gun from Birmingham, UK, which he often used during his hunting expeditions—a symbol of both his affluence and his martial skill.

The political landscape of Doda during the early years of Sheikh Abdullah's rule was marked by tension and unrest. A significant episode unfolded during this period, involving Mirza Ghulam Mustafa Beg and the National Guards, a paramilitary force established by Sheikh Abdullah to maintain order in the politically unstable region of Jammu and Kashmir. The incident was precipitated by political tensions surrounding Mohammad Khalil Kichloo, a prominent political figure in Doda, who was rumored to have declared himself a Nawab and advocated for the independence of the district. In response to these developments, Sheikh Abdullah's government formed the Aman Committee, a peacekeeping force composed of local villagers and armed volunteers known as home guards.

One of the most volatile incidents during this period occurred in Udhyanpur, where Mirza Ghulam Mustafa Beg was acting as the Numberdar. A unit of 26 home guards led by Habibullah Chopan arrived in Udhyanpur on a patrol mission and sought accommodation at the local Dewankhana (guesthouse). As per custom, the hosts prepared a simple meal of rice and lentils; however, Chopan, hailing from a pastoral background, demanded that a sheep be slaughtered for mutton. When informed that such an arrangement was not possible, Chopan became enraged. In a fit of anger, he and his men began smashing the doors and windows of the Dewankhana.

Hearing the commotion, Mirza Ghulam Mustafa Beg, who was sleeping in his room, feared an imminent attack. Reacting swiftly, he barricaded his door and armed himself with two loaded desi rifles (locally made guns). He stood prepared to defend himself when he heard the voices of his relatives outside the window, pleading with him not to open fire. According to Syed Javed Gilani, a major tragedy was narrowly avoided that night; had Mustafa Beg fired upon the home guards, it could have triggered a violent and bloody conflict.

Despite the de-escalation, Mustafa Beg was arrested by Chopan and his men, who intended to execute him. At this critical moment, Ghulam Rasool Beg, Mustafa Beg's relative, arrived at the scene. Displaying remarkable courage, Ghulam Rasool confronted the armed home guards, disarmed some of them, and engaged in a fierce struggle. In the ensuing scuffle, one of the home guards opened fire, followed by others. Ghulam Rasool was struck by two bullets—one to his finger and another to his shoulder.

Witnessing the violent scene, Sarwa Begum, Mustafa Beg's daughter and a young girl at the time, rushed to aid Ghulam Rasool. Using a traditional woolen razayi (quilt), she covered his wounds. The bullet had lodged deep into his shoulder, and the quilt was soon soaked with blood. Her swift intervention prevented further blood loss and likely saved his life.

The incident underscored the volatile political atmosphere of the time and the precarious balance of power in the region. It also highlighted the resilience and bravery of the men, whose actions during this crisis left a lasting imprint on the region's history.

Following the violent confrontation at Udhyampur, Chopan and his men fled the scene, leaving behind a tense and volatile atmosphere. Ghulam Rasool Beg, wounded from two bullet shots—one in his finger and another in his shoulder—was immediately taken to the house of Syed Gani, the father of Mustafa Gilani, where his wounds were carefully bandaged. The next day, Amin Beg, the Station House Officer (SHO) of the area, a native of Anantnag, arrived to conduct an inquiry into the incident. The situation remained tense, and the authorities closely monitored the political undercurrents brewing in the region.

In the aftermath of the incident, Ghulam Rasool Beg was relocated to Doda for his safety, where he stayed at the residence of Hassan Kriypak, a local notable. Meanwhile, the home guards intensified their search for Mohammad Khalil Kichloo, the alleged leader of the secessionist movement. The home guards also targeted two prominent political activists, Mohammad Atta Ullah Soharwardi and Abdul Gani Masfareedi, who were associated with the Mahaz



Rajshumari (Plebiscite Front)—a political organization that advocated for a referendum on the future of Kashmir.

To evade arrest, Soharwardi and Masfareedi took a circuitous escape route through Udhyanpur, Barath, and other nearby villages until they reached Magam. There, they were sheltered by the Khanday family, a respected clan in the region, who provided them with refuge for approximately three weeks. This protection allowed the political activists to escape the relentless pursuit of the home guards, highlighting the solidarity and resistance among local communities during this period of political unrest.

Masfareedi later became a politician and is believed to have migrated to Pakistan, where he remained politically active. In a striking turn of events, Molvi Attaullah Soharwardi eventually aligned himself with the National Conference, the very political party led by Sheikh Abdullah. Soharwardi's son currently serves as the Imam of Jamia Masjid Doda and is a highly respected religious and political figure, continuing to maintain a strong affiliation with the National Conference.

Mirza Ghulam Mustafa Beg, the author's grandfather, was married to two women from prominent families, strengthening the Mirza family's influence and social standing. His first wife was from the Khawaja family of Kishtwar, and they had a son, Mirza Ajmal Beg, who later had two sons, Mirza Imran Beg and

Mirza Kamran Beg. His second wife, Mirza Sarwa Begum, was also from the Mirza family and was the author's grandmother. They had three sons: Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg, Mirza Shabir Ahmed Beg, and Mirza Shahnawaz Beg. Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg, the author's father, married Tehmina Akhter, daughter of Ghulam Hassan Tak from the Tak family of Doda. They had three children together: Dr. Mirza Zamin Raja Beg and Dr. Mirza Abroo Jan Beg. Mirza Shabir Ahmed Beg married Shaheena Begum from a prominent Khora family in Doda. They had two children, Mirza Asif Jaan Beg and Novreena Beg. Mirza Shahnawaz Beg married Mirza Jahanara Beg, and they had three children: Mehvish Beg, Mehak Beg, and Mirza Tabish Raja Beg.

Another respected elder, **Mirza Mohi ud Din Beg**, also known as Mohi Lala, has two sons, Mirza Mushtaq Beg and Mirza Zakir Beg. Mirza Siraj Beg had three children: Mirza Irshad Beg, Mirza Mubashir Beg, and Mirza Wazir Beg. Mirza Wazir Beg's descendants included Mirza Shakir Beg, Mirza Ashiq Beg, and Mirza Muzaffar Hussain Beg and his children. The author acknowledges that while many other members of the Timurid lineage exist, they cannot recall all their names and apologizes for any omissions.

### **Chapter Three: Life Under the Timurid Mughal Feudal Lords.**

The settlement of the Mirza nobility in Udhyanpur was accompanied by the migration of three other clans: the Syed, the Akhoon, and the Parray. These clans played distinct and well-defined roles within the society, reflecting the hierarchical and functional structure of the community. The Syeds, who were Gilani Sadaat, were brought into the society primarily for marriage alliances. As descendants of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) through the revered Qadiri saint Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jeelani, the Syeds were considered noble and respected. The Mirzas, who maintained a strict policy of not marrying their daughters to lower castes, viewed the Syeds as suitable and honorable partners for their daughters. If a suitable match could not be found within the Mirza family itself, the next preferred option was to seek alliances with the Syeds, ensuring the preservation of social status and religious nobility.

The Akhoons were integrated into the Mirza society as religious scholars and teachers. They were responsible for the spiritual and religious education of the community, teaching the Quran and providing religious guidance. They conducted *Khatmaat* (recitation of the Quran and other spiritual litanies) and performed *Durood o Fatiha Khwani* (invocation of blessings and prayers), playing a central role in maintaining the religious and spiritual integrity of the Mirza household.

Their role extended beyond religious instruction, as they were also consulted on matters of religious law and moral conduct.

The Parray clan was introduced to serve as the working class within the Mirza society. They provided essential labor and domestic service, managing household chores and agricultural tasks. The Parays were considered loyal and dependable, forming the backbone of the Mirza estate's workforce. Their contribution ensured the smooth functioning of the household and supported the social and economic stability of the Mirza family. The integration of these three lineages — the Syeds for marital alliances and social honor, the Akhoons for religious and spiritual guidance, and the Parays for labor and service — created a structured and interdependent society within Udhyampur.

### **The Gilani Clan:**

The roots of the Gilani Syed Family can be traced back to the revered Sufi Saint of the Qadiriyyah Order, Shaykh Syed Abdul Qadir Geelani, through whom they can claim a direct lineage to the Last Messenger of Islam, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Having migrated from Baghdad to Kashmir, the family came to be known as Jilani Sadaat, owing to the connection with the illustrious patron saint Shaykh Abdul Qadir Geelani, originally from Jilan City in Iran, who later moved to Baghdad. Primarily adhering to and propagating the Qadiriyya Sufi order, some

members of the Gilani Qadiri Syed Family resided in the Khanyaar region, while others ventured into adjacent rural areas to spread the teachings of Islam and Tasawuf. As part of this movement, the family eventually settled in Village Magaam in the Anantnag District of Kashmir.

Peer Syed Najm Din, son of Syed Aziz Ullah and grandson of Syed Adu Saeed, was the distinguished figure who was invited to Udhyanpur by the Mirza Sahibaan. During this period, Doda was a part of District Udhampur and Tehsil Ramban. Syed Najm Din was a revered figure known for his expertise in traditional Peeri Mureedi and the dissemination of religious and spiritual knowledge. He was welcomed by the Timurid Mughal Nobility of Udhyanpur, who were descendants of the powerful Mughals that once reigned over the Indian Subcontinent and held significant influence as Jagirdars in the region. Recognizing Syed Najm Din's distinguished Syed lineage, pious character, profound knowledge, and spiritual wisdom, the Mirza Sahibaan honored him by giving one of their daughters in marriage to him along with substantial land, around 100 kanal as per oral narrations, as a gift, thereby facilitating his permanent settlement in Udhyanpur.

The core motivation behind bringing the Gilani Syeds to Udhyanpur was the issue of marriage within the Mirza caste. The Mirzas adhered to strict matrimonial practices, marrying within their own caste due to a sense of superiority and the lack

of suitable matches from other families, as much of the rural populace belonged to the kashtkar peasantry. However, the Geelani Syeds, tracing their lineage to Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) through the renowned Sufi Saint Shaykh Abdul Qadir Geelani, were highly respected and esteemed by the Mirza Sahibaan. Thus, when suitable grooms from within the Mirza clan were unavailable, the daughters of the Mirza nobility were given in marriage to Gilani Syeds.

It is noteworthy that during this particular period, there were no other recognized Syeds present in the region. The use of the title "Shah" with names had two distinct connotations. On one hand, the Syeds used "Shah" as a title, while on the other hand, it was adopted as a surname locally by families of lower social standing, referred to as "Fakeer" or "Watal" in the vernacular.

Additionally, some individuals from other castes also adopted the surname "Shah" due to its association with certain professions at the time. Despite the Islamic prohibition against changing surnames, social circumstances prompted this practice as the prevailing social hierarchy unjustly favored the Gilani Syeds. As a Persian poet once said,

*“Saal e Awwal Kraal Boodam  
Saal e Doyam Molvi,  
Bakht agar Yaari Kunad,  
Eim Saal Syed Mee Showad.”*

Which Roughly translates to:

In the first year, I was a porter,  
In the next year, I was a Molvi.  
If the luck continues to smile upon me,  
Next Year I will be a Syed.

Consequently, many sought to associate themselves with the respected Syed lineage, which held high regard within the Islamic world. Another argument to this case is that the arrival of the Gilani Sadaat effectively nullified claims of other Sadaat in the region, as the Mirza Sahibaan would have preferred to marry their daughters into pre-existing Sadaat families if such lineages were present.

Over time, those who originally bore the surname "Shah" completely abandoned it and identified themselves as Syeds, even though they lacked historical or lineage records (Shajra e Nasb) to validate their claims. Thus, the credibility of these claims is uncertain, whereas the sole Gilani Sadaat family in the region can trace their authentic lineage to Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) through Shaykh Abdul Qadir Geelani.

Among the progeny of Syed Najm Din, notable figures include Syed Mohammad Shah, Syed Shams Din, Syed Hasan Shah, and Syed Ahmed Shah. While Syed Mustafa Shah returned to

Kashmir, Syed Shams Din had no offspring. The descendants of Syed Hasan Shah include Syed Baha ud Din, Syed Yousuf Shah, and Syed Gani Shah. Syed Baha ud Din, unfortunately, did not have any children. Additionally, Mirza Musammat Mughlani, a member of the Mirza clan and daughter of Mirza Ahad Beg and sister of Mirza Sikandar Beg, was also married into the Gilani Sadaat family.

Syed Ahmed Shah, who had two wives, had children from both unions. His son, Syed Jalal ud Din, born from the first marriage, was raised by his maternal relatives in Kishtwar, the Siddique Family, and grew to become a respected spiritual figure. He had two children, Syed Hakim Gulam Hasan and Syed Lutfullah Gilani. The latter relocated to Chanapora, Kashmir, in 1975 after selling his house in Doda. From the second marriage, Syed Mubarak Shah, Syed Aziz ud Din, and Syed Maqbool Shah were born. Syed Mubarak Shah Gilani, who achieved the 5th standard education and received a certificate from the headmaster Mukhtar Malik of Kishtwar, had a son named Syed Javed Gilani and a daughter namely Miran Sahiba who was married to Syed Ghulam Mustafa Gilani. The Syed Javed Gilani went on to retire as the Chief Librarian of the District Library Doda and presently resides in Doda. The Gilani Syed family continues to be represented by Syed Gani Shah, Syed Yousuf Shah, Syed Baha ud Din Shah, and their next-generation members, such as Syed Ghulam Mustafa Gilani, Ghulam Rasool Gilani, and their respective offspring.



### **The Akhoon Clan:**

The Mullah, Mallah, and Molvi constituted a significant religious class, renowned for their invaluable religious services. According to the author of *Tareekh e Hasan Kashmir*, they were known as Akhoons due to their role as teachers of religious scriptures, including Arabic, and their performance of essential religious duties, such as leading prayers (Imamat) in mosques and other religious responsibilities. The Molvis, Qazis, Muftis, and Akhoons held prominent positions within the Mullah clan, owing to their extensive religious scholarship.

Prominent figures among the Mullahs included Abul Fazl, who served as the tutor to Emperor Aurangzeb Aalamgeer, Mulla Jeewan Jaunpuri, and the contemporary scholar of Mujadid Alif Thani's era, Abdul Hakeem Sialkoti. Many prominent Mullahs actively accompanied and served alongside the Mughals, Afghans, and other Muslim rulers.

The Mirza Sahiban recognized the significance of the Molvis in the social, cultural, and religious framework, and thus, these religious scholars were included in the settlement of Udhyampur. They played pivotal roles in society, conducting traditional litanies and spiritual invocations known as Khatmaat or Khatm Shareef, and offering Fatiha Khwani, a customary prayer to bless the departed. Furthermore, they taught the Holy Quran, fulfilled religious duties, and were proficient in the

practice of spiritual treatments, including the writing of amulets.

This distinguished religious class, addressed by the title of Molvi, Akhoon, Mullah, or Mullazada, was esteemed and held close proximity to the Mughal rulers. Thus, they were brought along by the Mirza Sahiban to Udhyanpur, contributing significantly to the establishment of the settlement.

Regrettably, over time, the title of Mullah or Mallah has lost some of its reverence, now being mistakenly viewed in a negative light due to various reasons, including ignorance of historical knowledge. Consequently, some Akhoons have abandoned these surnames and adopted titles like Soharwardi, Andrabi, and others.

However, it is essential to recognize that the title remains prevalent in many Muslim regions, including India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.

Among the notable Akhoons in Udhyanpur were Khaliq Ju Akhoon, who served as an Imam at the Masjid, his son Abdul Aziz Ju Akhoon, and their descendants, including Ali Ju Akhoon, Mustafa Ju Akhoon, Ghulam Ali Akhoon, Ghulam Ahmad Akhoon, and their children, who continue to preserve their esteemed heritage.

### **The Parray Clan:**

As per historical accounts, the origin of the Parray clan can be traced back to the Rajput tribe, who embraced Islam after converting from Hinduism. Throughout history, they maintained close associations with the ruling class, serving as soldiers, attendants, and employees. The name "Parray" is said to have originated from the village of Pareyhastpora or Paraspora, where Rajput families resided. Over time, when these families dispersed and migrated to various locations, they came to be known as Parray, derived from the name of their ancestral village, a customary practice in Kashmir to name clans after their villages.

The Parray clan played a crucial role in the socio-political framework, being enlisted as manpower for battles, providing service, and assisting in transportation and carriage. Moreover, they served as employees for personal tasks in homes and gardens, demonstrating loyalty and dedication to the Mirza Sahibaa's noble household. This loyal service earned them a prominent position within the Mirza Sahibaa's retinue and facilitated their inclusion in the settlement of Udhyanpur.

### **Kashtkaars and peasantry:**

The region also comprised a peasant class known as Kashtkars, predominantly working as Zamindars (farmers) on lands

belonging to the Jagirdar Nobility and receiving a share of the yield from the cultivated fields. However, with the rise of Shaikh Abdullah to power and his appointment as the Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, significant changes were introduced through an agrarian reform program in 1948.

This reform led to the abolition of Jagirs, Muafis, and Mukkararies, resulting in the transfer of land ownership from the Mirza Nobility to the peasants who had previously worked on these lands. The objective of this move was to gain favor and support among the peasantry and rural population, as the Mirwaiz family held greater prominence and influence in the Srinagar city area, which Shaikh Abdullah could not fully enjoy. Thus, he implemented these land reforms to enhance his reputation and garner support outside Srinagar.

As a result of the land reforms, the Mirza Nobility lost a substantial portion of their Jageer, amounting to more than 2200 kanals of land, to the peasantry who became the new landowners. Although it had been only a few years since the peasants began collecting yields from the lands in Kulhand and neighboring villages, the Zamindari profession remained the primary occupation for the Kashtkars.

Many villagers continued to engage in farming, with agriculture serving as their main source of livelihood. While in the past, they lived in dire poverty and dependency on the Jagirdars,

many of these families have since emerged from poverty after becoming landowners, and thanks to educational and welfare initiatives, some have secured government and administrative positions, along with opportunities in the education and private sectors.

Nevertheless, some families still face economic challenges, but overall, the quality of life for the Kashtkars has shown improvement due to progressive government initiatives for regional development.

### **A Sketch of Doda Village at that time**

Doda is a region of high mountains and deep valleys in the Chenab Valley region of Jammu and Kashmir. The name of the region has various etymologies, some of which are based on legends and folklore. One such legend traces the origin of the name to a migrant utensil maker from Multan, Pakistan, named Deeda, who settled in the region. Another legend attributes the name to the cultivation of poppy flowers, locally known as dodd, which were used for medicinal and narcotic purposes. The region was also known as “Faridabad” in honor of Sufi saint Shah Farid ud Din Baghdadi, who visited and preached in Doda before moving to Kishtwar.

Doda was historically part of the principalities of Kishtwar and Bhadarwah, which were ruled by local Rajas of different clans

and dynasties. These principalities were conquered by Maharaja Gulab Singh of Jammu, the founder of the Dogra dynasty, in the early 19th century. He also annexed Paddar, a former territory of Chamba State, to his domain. The Dogra dynasty ruled over the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, which comprised of the regions of Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh and Gilgit-Baltistan, until 1947. The princely state acceded to India after the partition, but its status and sovereignty remained disputed. Doda was initially part of the Udhampur district, but was separated as a distinct district in 1948. The district was further bifurcated into three districts: Doda, Kishtwar and Ramban in 2006.

Doda is a region of remarkable diversity and complexity, both in terms of its demography and its culture. The population of the region consists of various ethnic, linguistic and religious groups, who have coexisted and interacted for centuries. The majority of the population is Muslim, followed by Hindus, Sikhs, Christian and Buddhists. The Muslims living here have different origins, such as Kashmiri, Gujjar, Pahari and Punjabi. The Hindus are mostly Rajputs and Harijans who follow the Vaishnavite tradition. The Sikhs are mainly migrants from Punjab, who speak Punjabi and follow the teachings of Guru Nanak. The Buddhists are mostly from the Zaskar Valley, who speak the Zanskari language and follow the Tibetan Buddhism.

The main languages spoken in the region are Kashmiri, Bhaderwahi, Sarazi, Urdu, Gojri, Kishtwari, Padri, Pogali and Rambani. These languages belong to different linguistic families, such as Indo-Aryan, Dardic and Tibeto-Burman, and have different scripts, such as Devanagari, Perso-Arabic and Tibetan. Doda has also been a region of turmoil and violence, which has been affected by various phases of conflict and insurgency since 1947. The region also witnessed the rise of militancy and separatism in the late 1980s and early 1990s, which aimed to secede from India and join Pakistan or create an independent state. The region became a battleground between various separatist groups and security forces trying to suppress the insurgency. The region also suffered from communal violence, human rights violations, corruption and underdevelopment, which further alienated and marginalized the people of the region.

District Doda is characterised by a diverse and abundant cultural legacy. It served as a significant hub for a variety of socio-political endeavours and was also a focal point for religious and cultural activities. The fort of Doda, which has disappeared, stands as a silent testament to its historical presence. The structure was constructed by the Rajas of Kishtwar and thereafter used by the Dogra monarchs. Now a mere vestige in the annals of history, it once functioned as a fortified military base for troops, a detention facility for prisoners, a central location for military deployments and

transfers, and a crucial checkpoint and sanctuary within the region's military structure. The fort was dismantled in 1952, and now, the Government Boys Higher Secondary School is located on its former location. The region is home to several religious sites that symbolise the diverse religions and customs of the area. Among the notable sites are the mausoleum dedicated to Shah Farid ud Din Baghdadi, the temple honouring Vasuki Nag, the gurdwara associated with Guru Nanak, and the monastery known as Phugtal. The area also has several natural attractions that exhibit its picturesque landscape and biological variety.

### **Insurrection and Retribution: The Rajput Challenge to Dogra Authority**

Anecdotal evidence from oral traditions preserved by political activist and member of civil society Abdul Qayoom Zargar endures in the annals of regional history. He worked as the personal aide to Mizra Afzal Beg, a highly respected figure in Kashmiri politics and the first Deputy Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir. Beg was also a member of the Constituent Assembly of India.

According to the narrative, under this feudal society, there existed a practice where the most aesthetically pleasing young women from the remote areas were chosen to serve in the Maharaja's harem. The narrative from small village is on a Rajput youth, who hailed from a martial caste renowned for



their courage and commitment to the ideals of integrity and fidelity. The selection of his sister for the Maharaja's harem was seen as a significant disgrace to him and his family.

As a reaction, he initiated an uprising against the Maharaja, which is noteworthy as it exemplifies a rare occurrence of overt revolt by a Hindu subordinate against the Dogra monarchs. This insurrection was not just motivated by personal animosity; it was a deliberate act of defiance against the totalitarian policies of the monarchy. As part of his rebellion, Bhikkam Singh set fire to the houses of Dogra loyalists and beneficiaries, probably some the Nehru families, leading to a harsh order of punishment—and possibly death—for him. Following the pursuit, he successfully evaded arrest and sought refuge with Miyan Hussain Alvi Qadri, a highly respected Sufi belonging to the Qadiriyya order. His subsequent vanishing, ascribed by some individuals to the supernatural intervention of the Sufi saint, adds an element of mystery to his legacy.

Zargar remembers a stage play that portrayed the life of Bhikkam Singh, written by the father of a renowned physician. Unfortunately, the play was destroyed in a fire, leaving only Zargar's childhood recollections of participating in it. Although the veracity of these accounts has not been established, they provide very useful insights from indigenous perspectives at a turbulent time. Therefore, it is important to chronicle them in the historical discourse.

Another era after the Dogra reign has not gone well for the Doda area either. The period of militancy in Doda had a profound impact on the socio-economic structure of the region. The period of separatist wave, which began in the late 1980s and continued till the early 2000s, was marked by violence, unrest, human rights violations, and political instability. The time of upheaval had a significant impact on the economic circumstances and prospects of the population, resulting in extensive poverty, unemployment, and underdevelopment. The struggle also gave rise to instances of fraud, extortion, corruption, and exploitation, allowing some individuals to accumulate fortune and influence at the detriment of others.

An outcome of the violence was the deterioration and destitution of several influential and esteemed families in the area, who had played a significant role in the social, cultural, and political advancement of the region. These families, who belonged to different ethnic, religious, and professional backgrounds, were targeted and lost their properties, businesses, and sources of income, and some were even compelled to migrate to other places or live in destitution.

Another outcome of the armed conflict was the ascent and enrichment of many low-class and unscrupulous people in the region, who exploited the conflict and the chaos for their personal gain. These people used various means of fraud, blackmail, corruption, and exploitation to accumulate wealth

and influence. Some of these people were involved in illegal activities, such as smuggling, drug trafficking, blackmailing etc. Some of these people were also involved in legal activities, such as contracting or trading but resorted to blatant corruption. The region has faced several problems and difficulties, but has also witnessed the emergence of various leaders, activists, writers, artists and personalities, who have contributed to its social, political, cultural and economic development. The region has also seen the growth of various initiatives and movements, which have aimed to promote peace, harmony, justice and development in the region.

In the early 1940s, the town presently known as Doda was essentially a hamlet characterised by severe poverty and lack of growth. The economic circumstances were so dismal that owning a donkey was considered a sign of wealth and prosperity, while owning two donkeys was a mark of affluence and prestige. The people of Bhaderwah, who were relatively better off, used to ridicule and mock this situation, as they resented the fact that Doda was considered the district headquarter and the district was named after it. The lack of adequate road connectivity, limited means of public transport and poverty in the region forced the people to rely on animals as the primary mode of transporting goods and agricultural produce from Puldoda to Upper Doda.

During one of our conversation, the late Syed Javed Gilani revealed that he completed his FA examination at Bhaderwah, a town that is situated near Doda. During this period, he resided in a hotel, namely the well-known Ahad Khan Hotel, which is renowned for its delectable cakes and kebabs. Nevertheless, when he was residing there, he saw a distinctive characteristic of Bhaderwah's social milieu. In close proximity to the hotel, he saw a group of youths congregating and openly partaking in the consumption of alcohol, a behaviour that deviated from the established social norms of the region at that period.

One of the stories that he narrated illustrates the hardships and struggles of the people of Doda during this period is that of Abdul Rashid Pategaro, a resident of Doda, and his relative Ghulam Hassan Pategaro, who was a student. According to Syed Javed Gilani, his friend Abdul Rashid used to tutor Ghulam Hassan in all the subjects during the winter season, sometimes to the point of exhaustion. However, during the summer season, Muhammad Chacha Pategaro, another relative of Ghulam Hassan, used to compensate Abdul Rashid for his tuition fees by loading wood onto two donkeys and delivering it to Abdul Rashid's home. This arrangement enabled Ghulam Hassan to continue his education and demonstrated the turbulent times when meagre resources were considered luxuries and life was simple.

Javed Gilani also recounted his tenure of residing in a rental room in Bundoda, a suburban area of the former hamlet Doda at that period. The main source of livelihood for the people of Bundoda was transporting goods using donkeys, which provided them with a meagre income. Every morning, he would wake up to the sound of people grinding poppy seeds in a stone grinder (Nyaem) to be added to their tea, a traditional Kashmiri beverage. The sound of the grinding resembled the loud noise of a helicopter. After preparing their tea, the people would then attend to their donkeys, dressing them for their work. Sometimes, they would vent their frustrations by abusing their donkeys verbally. Once their donkeys were ready, they would set off to the outer villages to conduct their trade. This routine was a typical feature of daily life in Bundoda and reflected the unique way of living and working in the region during that time.

Syed Javed Gilani pursued his FA exam in Bhaderwah. During this time, he remembered staying at a hotel, one of the well-known establishments being Ahad Khan Hotel, famous for its delectable cakes and kebabs. However, during his stay, he observed a peculiar aspect of Bhaderwah's social environment. Near the hotel, he witnessed young individuals gathering and openly indulging in the consumption of wine, which was quite unusual and reflected a different social norm prevailing in the area at that time. Despite these challenges, Syed Javed Gilani persevered and successfully passed his bachelor's and master's degrees in arts, eventually becoming a librarian.

## **Damali Faqeers**

Doda village was also home to a community of Damaali Fakeers. These Fakirs resided around Akramabaad and Daak Mehla areas of the village and were highly renowned for their unique dance called "Damali" in the local vernacular. Their Damali performances were a prominent cultural attraction in the region.

The Damaali Fakeers were often booked to showcase their mesmerizing dance at weddings and other festive occasions, where they mesmerized the audience with their movements and expressions. Their performances added a special charm to the local culture, and their presence was valued and appreciated by the community. The Damali dance, with its traditional flair and cultural significance, was a part of the vibrant and diverse cultural heritage of Doda village.

## **Notable figures from Doda during that period**

The history of Doda district is replete with the presence and contributions of many spiritual figures, hailing from numerous Sufi orders (Silsilah) and traditions. These individuals had substantial influence on the social, cultural, and religious aspects of the area, as well as on the political and historical events that determined its future. Below, a short introduction is provided for some of these figures:

Haji Akram was a prominent spiritual figure in Doda probably belonging to Naqshbandiyah sufi order, who would often sit at Jamia Masjid on his Mucham, a raised tower post used for getting fresh air. The Mucham was elevated from the ground, and a staircase was used to climb on it. Haji Akram was revered by many, including Zorawar Singh, who sought his blessings during one of his expeditions. Once, Gulab Singh's wife fell ill, and he immediately sent for Haji Akram and his followers, who took him in a palanquin to Jammu. As per the oral traditions, on their return journey, when they reached Khelani, Haji Akram was nearing his end, and the angel of death appeared before him. However, he saved his last few breaths (nafs) until he reached Doda, his homeland, and then breathed his last. This act of preserving his last few breaths is in accordance with Islamic tradition, which suggests that humans have a limited number of breaths (dam) in the world. By saving his last few breaths, he was able to reach his beloved home safely and honorably. He was later buried outside Jamia Masjid, Doda.

**Peer Irfan Naqashbandi** was a prominent spiritual figure from Abbottabad, who arrived in Doda and belonged to the Naqashbandiyah Sufi order. Apart from his spiritual pursuits, he was also skilled in making the desi cannon balls (topp). During a period of communal tension between Hindus and Muslims in the district of Doda, Peer Irfan played a crucial role in preventing religious clashes. He rode on a horse and taught the locals how to make a cannon, which he used to blow up a

bridge, preventing a group of Hindu mob from crossing over to Doda. His actions helped in maintaining peace and preventing further escalation of tensions. Interestingly, it is said that when forces fired at him, miraculously, no bullet would hit him. This added to his reputation and mystical aura. However, after some time, he returned back to Pakistan, leaving behind the impact of his courageous and spiritual actions during his stay in Doda.

**Molvi Ameen Suharwardi** was an eminent spiritual figure and religious scholar of the time. He was highly educated with expertise in Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) and religious scriptures. He was well versed in Arabic, Persian, and Urdu languages. He was also a poet and used to write Naat (poetry in praise of the Prophet Muhammad). He was the most prominent and learned person among the Molvi clan of Doda, and a respected authority on Islamic matters.

**Haji Ghulam Ahmed Tak** was a prominent spiritual figure in Doda known for his simplicity, honesty, and deep devotion to worship and devotion. He earned a living by selling books, kohl, surma, and other small items outside Jama Masjid, carrying them in a small sandook briefcase trunk. Despite his humble occupation, Haji Sahab was highly respected in the community for his integrity and spiritual presence. He embodied the virtues of honesty, fairness, piety, and asceticism. He was the first person from Doda to perform the Hajj pilgrimage by sea route, a journey that he documented in a diary



that has been preserved by the author of this book. He was also a respected guardian of the Old Eid Gah, where he had a visionary dream of the Patron Saint Shah Fareed ud Din Baghdadi protecting the village from communal violence. One of the most notable incidents that illustrate his sense of honesty and fairness occurred when he sold a small bottle of kohl to a local poet, Ghulam Rasool Khora, for a few Aanas. After realizing that he had taken one salayi (needle) of kohl from the bottle, he ran after the poet and gave him another bottle of kohl, explaining that he wanted to provide the full amount paid for. This incident reflects his adherence to the ethical principles of Islam and his respect for his customers. Haji sahab was also known for his miraculous abilities, which he used to help the people of Doda in times of need.

One such instance was when a groom's horse got stuck in the snow during a snowfall, while the Baraat was on its way to bring the bride. The people sought Haji Sahab's help, and he gave them an amulet to hang on a tree. As soon as they did so, the snow stopped, the clouds cleared, and the sun came out, allowing the Baraat to proceed. Another remarkable incident was when a young boy, Ghulam Hassan Tak, the book Seller, interrupted Haji Sahab while he was deeply engrossed in his zikr (spiritual remembrance). Haji Sahab remained undisturbed, and the boy fainted. However, after completing his zikr, Haji Sahab called the boy, and he woke up as if nothing had happened. These incidents left a lasting impression on those

who witnessed them, and enhanced Haji Sahab's reputation as a saintly person.

Despite not having attended any formal school, Haji Ghulam Ahmed Tak was able to read and write. He possessed a diary in which he recorded his journey to Hajj pilgrimage, which he undertook by sea route. He was accompanied till Delhi by Ghulam Haider Tak, who deeply respected him.

The diary is a valuable source of information about the Hajj experience of Haji Sahab, as well as his personal and spiritual insights. The diary has been carefully preserved by the author of this book. During a period of communal tension in the region, Haji Ghulam Ahmed Tak was entrusted with guarding the Old Eid Gah, which was a sacred place for the Muslims of Doda. One night, while he was on duty, he fell asleep and saw a dream in which he witnessed a huge army in green clothes surrounding the Doda village. He recognized the leader of the army as the Patron Saint Shah Fareed ud Din Baghdadi, who reassured him that his army was guarding the city. When he woke up, he realized that the dream was a divine sign, and that the village was safe from the turmoil of the communal frenzy. This incident shows the spiritual connection that Haji Sahab had with the Patron Saint, as well as his devotion to the Old Eid Gah.

During his final days, Haji Ghulam Ahmed Tak faced paralysis and had to be fed through a tube. Despite his condition, he

adhered strictly to the principles of Zuhd (asceticism) and esoteric practices. He refused to eat anything that was not prepared at home, as he observed a strict spiritual discipline. Ghulam Haider Tak, a medical assistant, recounted an incident during that time when he tried to feed Haji Sahab biscuit with milk. As soon as the artificial food reached his mouth, miraculously, Haji Sahab raised his paralyzed hand and pulled the tube out of his mouth. This incident left Ghulam Haider repenting and vowing not to feed him anything that was not piously cooked at home. It reflects the deep spiritual devotion and adherence to ascetic practices that Haji Sahab upheld throughout his life, even during his most challenging times. He was a pious and devoted individual, revered for his spiritual presence and noble character in the community of Doda.

He was buried in the backside graveyard of Jamia Masjid. In a very controversial move, the old graveyard was desecrated by the Masjid committee as per a doubtful ruling of some Mufti and new building constructed at its lieu which created anger, resentment and sentiments of disagreement in the community. The issue was silenced yet the bitterness prevailed.

**Molvi Ghulam Ahmed Andrabi**, also known as Amm Lala was another prominent spiritual figure of that time. He belonged to the Akoon clan of Doda and was a spiritual disciple of Miyan Hussain Alvi of Kangaliyah, a branch of the Qadiriyya order of Sufism. He was known for his knowledge,

piety, devotion, and service to the people of Doda. Some other names that come to my mind with respect to Peeri Mureedi system are Molvi Haider Indrabi, Molvi Mubarak Shah and my maternal grandfather Ghulam Hassan Tak who was trained by Haji Gulam Ahmed Tak.

### **Prominent political personalities from Doda during that era**

Some of the notable personalities in the village of Doda during that era were Mohammad Khalil Kichloo, a prominent political figure. There were rumours circulating that he either claimed to be, or was regarded as, a Nawab and was advocating for the district's independence. He faced active opposition from the regime led by Shaikh Abdullah, which had close ties with The Indian National Congress.

Additionally, there were two other influential political leaders, Mohammad Atta Ullah Soharwardi and Abdul Gani Masfareedi, who supported Mahaz Rajshumari (Plebiscite Front). Despite being targeted, they managed to escape capture by taking a route through Udhyanpur, Barath, and nearby villages until they found refuge in Magam. There, they sought sanctuary with the Khanday Family for around twenty to twenty-five days, successfully evading the authorities. Molvi Atta Ullah later decided to leave Mahaz Rajshumari and joined the National Conference.

Apart from them, two other prominent figures in Doda were Ghulam Qadir Tak and Peer Saeed Shah. Remarkably, both had graduated from the University of Lahore during that period, which was quite an achievement considering the limited opportunities for higher education in the region at that time. Ghulam Qadir Tak pursued a career as a headmaster, while Peer Saeed Shah became an education officer.

Several prominent religious, intellectual, cultural, and artistic luminaries originate from Doda, Bhaderwah, and Kishtwar. Rasa Javedani, renowned for his extensive repertoire of poetry, including ghazals and nazms in Urdu, Hindi, and English, has had a lasting impact. Ghulam Nabi Doolwal, known as Janbaz Kashtwari, has made notable contributions to Kashmiri music and literature as a composer, vocalist, and lyricist. The poetry composed by Ghulam Rasool Kamgar, Nishat Kishtwari, and Ulfat Kishtwari echo the profound cultural legacy of the area, so enhancing the prestige of this distinguished collection.

Other notable figures of Doda include Muhammad Aqil Kraipak, who was the father of renowned child specialist of Doda, Dr. Zafarallah Kraipak. He was also a pious and spiritually inclined respectable personality of Doda. Khwaja Habib ullah Wani, who was a poet and preacher. Mohammad 60Abdullah Mintoo, who was well versed in history. Khwaja Ghulam Mohammad Khora, who was a Muazin (caller to prayer) of Jamia Masjid. Khwaja Habib ullah Khora, Khwaja

Ghulam Rasool Khora, and Khwaja Saad ullah Faridi, who were poets. Khwaja Mohammad Khalil Kichloo, Ghulam Hassan Nehroo, who were involved in the Rajshumari Movement, which demanded the merger of Doda with Pakistan. Some prominent families of Doda are Mantoo, Trangdoo, Kraipak, Khora, Dev, Khan, Chowdhry, Kichloo, Munshi, and Kilam.

## **Chapter Four: Amir Timur and his Legacy.**

In the annals of history, there existed a figure whose rise from humble beginnings to becoming one of the world's most exceptional conquerors has captured the imaginations of countless generations. Amir Timur, the tartar successor to Genghis Khan-ranks with Alexander the Great as one of the world's greatest conquerors. Born on the 9th of April 1336, Amir Timur, commonly known by his European appellations Tamerlane or Tamburlaine in the West, emerged from the ranks of the Barlas clan, a Tatar tribe with Mongol roots and descendants of the legendary Genghis Khan. His birthplace, a quaint village in the territory of Kesh under the lordship of a man named Ilgar, as recorded by Arabshah, surrounded by the majestic Zarafshan mountains, laid the foundation for his remarkable journey. Amir Timur, renowned for his exceptional leadership and military conquests, was also a man of profound spiritual depth, known for his mastery of the Holy Quran, that he had memorised by heart. He held a profound connection with his spiritual mentor, Shaykh Shams ud Din Kulya.

The young boy was named Temur, which translated to "iron" in the local language, a name that would later evolve into the Persian version, Temur-i-lang, meaning "Temur the Lame." This nickname stemmed from a crippling injury he suffered during his youth, a defining aspect that would resonate through history with the names Tamburlaine and Tamerlane, known far

and wide in Western accounts. As with many legendary figures, myths and omens accompanied Timur's birth. Legends spoke of his palms being filled with blood upon emerging from his mother's womb, an omen signifying that bloodshed would follow in his wake. These tales were recorded by Arabshah, a chronicler with a strong animosity towards Timur, born from past traumas as a captive in the hands of Tatar forces who had ravaged Damascus in 1401. This personal history colored Arabshah's biased account, adding complexity to the narrative of Timur's life.

Growing up in the rugged landscapes of the early fourteenth century steppes, young Temur honed his equestrian skills on the winter-frozen plains, fearlessly hunting bears and stags. His courage and leadership abilities soon gained him a reputation among his fellow brigands. Timur's charismatic personality and ambitious dreams led him to declare himself the chosen one, destined to conquer territories and rule over men, gathering a loyal entourage around him, as recounted by Arabshah.

Timur's path to prominence materialized in 1360 when he seized the opportunity presented by the chaos following the assassination of Amir Qazaghan in 1358. The Moghul Khan's invasion from the east aimed to reunite the fractured Chaghatay Ulus. Cunningly, Timur offered his services to the invading Moghul Khan, becoming a vassal ruler. An alliance with Amir Husayn further solidified his position, setting him on the course



to liberate Mawarannahr from the Moghuls. Over the years, Timur and Amir Husayn engaged in daring escapades, living as outlaws, bandits, and mercenaries, bravely challenging the Moghul occupation of Mawarannahr. Despite sustaining a severe injury that left him lame in both right limbs, Timur's tenacity, military acumen, and unyielding ambition allowed him to carve out a grand empire. This magnificent realm stretched from Moscow to the Mediterranean, and from Delhi to Damascus. Timur's awe-inspiring architectural endeavors, like the Ak Sarai or White Palace in Shakhrisabz, stood as symbols of his might and power.

In 1361, following the death of Amir Kazgan, the ruler of Transoxania's capital city, Samarkand, Tughluq Temür, the khan of neighboring Kashgar, seized control of Samarkand. Timur pledged his allegiance to Tughluq Temür and served as his minister. Under Tughluq Temür's patronage, Timur's brother-in-law, Amir Husayn, the grandson of Amir Kazgan, was named the governor of Transoxania. However, Timur soon escaped from Tughluq Temür's authority and joined forces with Amir Husayn.

In 1364, Timur and Amir Husayn overcame Ilyas Khoja, the appointed governor of Transoxania, establishing their dominion over the region by approximately 1366. Around 1370, Timur turned against Amir Husayn, besieging him in Balkh and ultimately leading to Amir Husayn's assassination. Timur then

proclaimed himself the sovereign of the Chagatai line of Khans and the restorer of the Mongol empire, with Samarkand as his seat of power.

Over the next decade, Timur engaged in military campaigns, conquering Jatah (eastern Turkistan) and Khwarezm. In 1380, his forces occupied Kashgar. He also provided military support to Tokhtamysh, the Mongol Khan of Crimea, against the Russians who opposed the Khan of the Golden Horde, Mamai. As a result of Timur's intervention, Moscow was occupied, and the Lithuanians were defeated near Poltava.

Timur's conquests in Persia commenced in 1383 with the capture of Herat. During this period, Persia's political and economic situation was precarious, with rival dynasties engaged in internal conflicts and unable to offer effective resistance. Seizing the opportunity, Timur extended his rule over Khorasan and eastern Persia between 1383 and 1385, followed by the subjugation of Fars, Iraq, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Georgia from 1386 to 1394.

Amidst his Persian campaigns, Timur faced challenges from Tokhtamysh, who invaded Azerbaijan in 1385 and Transoxania in 1388, leading to the defeat of Timur's generals. However, Timur pursued Tokhtamysh into the Russian steppes, resulting in the latter's defeat and dethronement in 1391. Although Tokhtamysh later raised a new army and invaded the Caucasus

in 1395, he eventually surrendered after a final defeat on the Kur River, during which Timur occupied Moscow for a year. Timur responded to revolts across Persia during these campaigns with severe repression, involving the destruction of entire cities, massacres of their populations, and the construction of towers using human skulls.

In 1398, Timur launched a military expedition into India, making his way towards Delhi. Crossing the Indus River in September 1398, Timur inflicted a devastating defeat on the army of the Delhi Sultan Mahmud Tughluq at Panipat on December 17. This resulted in the destruction of Delhi and its reduction to ruins, from which the city would take more than a century to recover. By April 1399, Timur returned to his capital, bearing immense spoils, including 90 captured elephants used to transport stones for the construction of a mosque in Samarkand, as documented by Ruy González de Clavijo.

Timur set out before the end of 1399 on his last great expedition, in order to punish the Mamluk Sultan of Egypt and the Ottoman Sultan Bayezid I for their seizures of certain of his territories. After restoring his control over Azerbaijan, he marched on Syria; Aleppo was stormed and sacked; the Mamluk army defeated; and Damascus occupied (1401), the deportation of its artisans to Samarkand being a fatal blow to its prosperity. In 1401, Baghdad was also taken by storm. 20,000

of its citizens were massacred, and all of its monuments were destroyed.

After wintering in Georgia, Timur invaded Anatolia, destroyed Bayezid's army near Ankara (July 20, 1402), and captured Smyrna from the Knights of Rhodes. Having received offers of submission from the Sultan of Egypt and from John VII (then emperor of the Byzantine Empire with Manuel II Palaeologus), Timur returned to Samarkand (1404) and prepared for an expedition to China. He set out at the end of December, fell ill at Otrar on the Syr Darya west of Chimkent, and died in February 1405. His body was embalmed, laid in an ebony coffin, and sent to Samarkand, where it was buried in the sumptuous tomb called Gur-e Amir. Before his death, he had divided his territories among his two surviving sons and his grandson, and, after years of internecine struggles, the lands were reunited by his youngest son, Shah Rokh.

By the 1360s, Timur began his rise as the leader of a small nomad band and, by guile and force of arms, established dominion over the lands between the Oxus and Jaxartes rivers (Transoxania). He then, for three decades, led his mounted archers to subdue each state from Mongolia to the Mediterranean. He was the last of the mighty conquerors of Central Asia to achieve such military success as leader of the nomad warrior lords, ruling both agricultural and pastoral peoples on an imperial scale. The poverty, bloodshed, and

desolation caused by his campaigns gave rise to many legends, which in turn inspired such works as Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great*.

The name Timur Lenk signified Timur the Lame, a title of contempt used by his Persian enemies, which became *Tamburlaine*, or *Tamerlane*, in Europe. Timur was heir to a political, economic, and cultural heritage rooted in the pastoral peoples and nomad traditions of Central Asia. He and his compatriots cultivated the military arts and discipline of Genghis Khan and, as mounted archers and swordsmen, scorned the settled peasants. Timur never took up a permanent abode. He personally led his almost constant campaigning forces, enduring extremes of desert heat and lacerating cold. When not campaigning, he moved with his army according to the season and grazing facilities. His court travelled with him, including his household of one or more of his nine wives and concubines. He strove to make his capital, Samarkand, the most splendid city in Asia, but when he visited it he stayed only a few days and then moved back to the pavilions of his encampment in the plains beyond the city.

Timur was, above all, a master of the military techniques developed by Genghis Khan, using every weapon in the military and diplomatic armoury of the day. He never missed an opportunity to exploit the adversary's weaknesses (political, economic, or military) or to use intrigue, treachery, and alliance

to his advantage. The seeds of victory were sown among the ranks of the enemy by his agents before an engagement. He conducted sophisticated negotiations with both neighbouring and distant powers, which are recorded in diplomatic archives from England to China. In battle, the nomadic tactics of mobility and surprise were his major weapons of attack.

Timur's most lasting memorials are the Timurid architectural monuments of Samarkand, covered in azure, turquoise, gold, and alabaster mosaics; these are dominated by the great cathedral mosque, ruined by an earthquake but still soaring to an immense fragment of dome. His mausoleum, the Gur-e Amir, is one of the gems of Islamic art. Within the sepulcher, he lies under a huge, broken slab of jade. The tomb was opened in 1941, having remained intact for half a millennium. The Soviet Archaeological Commission found the skeleton of a man who, though lame in both right limbs, must have been of powerful physique and above-average height.

His sons and grandsons fought over the succession when the Chinese expedition disbanded, but his dynasty survived in Central Asia for a century in spite of fratricidal strife. Samarkand became a center of scholarship and science. It was here that Ulugh Beg, his grandson, set up an observatory and drew up the astronomical tables that were later used by the English royal astronomers in the 17th century. During the Timurid renaissance of the 15th century, the city of Herat,

situated southeast of Samarkand, flourished as the epicenter of a brilliant school of Persian miniaturists, creating masterpieces of artistic expression. As the Timurid dynasty eventually came to an end in Central Asia by the beginning of the 16th century, its descendant, Babur, took charge in Kabul and went on to conquer Delhi, thus establishing the lineage of Muslim emperors known as the Great Mughals. Notably, it was from this lineage of the Great Mughals that the Mirza nobility of Udhyanpur trace their ancestral heritage, proudly preserving their connection to the illustrious Timurid legacy.

Amir Timur, renowned for his exceptional leadership and military conquests, was equally celebrated for his profound spiritual depth and mastery of the Holy Quran, which he had diligently committed to memory. His profound connection with his spiritual mentor, Shaykh Shams ud Din Kulya, exemplified the deep reverence he held for matters of the divine. In a place of profound spiritual significance, Amir Timur's spiritual guide, Shaykh Shams ud Din Kulya, and his revered father, Taraghay, rest side by side in the same tomb, a testament to the profound spiritual bond that connected them. In a heartfelt tribute to his father, spiritual guide, and beloved son, Temur established a daily distribution of alms, including the meat of twenty sheep, as a poignant act of remembrance in their honor. Amir Timur held a heartfelt desire to be laid to rest alongside his revered spiritual guide upon his death.

On June 19, 1941, the anthropologists, driven by historical clues, succeeded in locating the burial place of the esteemed conqueror, Amir Timur. Upon breaking open the tomb, they found the body of Timur still imbued with the exotic fragrance of the oils used during his embalming four centuries prior. Inside the tomb, a peculiar inscription caught their attention – a curse of sorts. The translated wording of the curse roughly stated:

"Whomsoever opens my tomb  
shall unleash an invader  
even more terrible than myself."

Despite the ominous inscription, the anthropologists dismissed it as medieval superstition and proceeded to remove Timur's body for further research, transporting it to Moscow. Curiously, three days later, on June 22, 1941, Adolf Hitler launched a surprise attack on Russia, initiating a devastating invasion that resulted in a staggering estimated 30 million Russian lives lost. As the German forces made relentless advances, Gerasimov, one of the anthropologists, reportedly became increasingly concerned about the potential consequences of disturbing Timur's remains. He sought to send a message to Stalin, expressing his apprehensions. Finally, in the winter of 1942, Gerasimov managed to reach Stalin, who, being a deeply superstitious man himself, took the matter seriously. Stalin arranged for a special aircraft to transport Timur's body back to



Samarkand, where they decided to give it a reverential reburial. Thus, in November 1942, Amir Timur's remains were reinterred, and the tomb was carefully sealed once more. Interestingly, shortly thereafter, the tide of the German invasion began to shift, with the Russians securing a crucial victory at the Battle of Stalingrad. It is said that the aircraft carrying Timur's remains deliberately took a detour over Stalingrad during the journey.

Presently, the vestiges of Ak Sarai stand as mute witnesses to the resplendence of Timur's dominion, serving as a poignant reminder of the once-broad realm he established through unwavering campaigns of conquest. From the expanse of Russia to the realms of India, the formidable legions under his command propagated terror across the continents of Asia, Africa, and Europe. The Timurid dynasty's prodigious cultural accomplishments and territorial annexations have etched an indelible imprint upon the annals of Asian history. Timur's enduring legacy continues to captivate the hearts and minds of historians and scholars, ranking him among the most eminent conquerors in the annals of human history, even mentioned in the same breath as the illustrious Alexander the Great.

Temporal ebb notwithstanding, the memory of this illustrious leader persists vibrantly, and his profound influence upon the course of Asian history remains unrivaled. The trajectory of Amir Timur's ascent from obscurity to legendary eminence

stands as a testament to the triumph of ambition, sagacious leadership, and military genius, an enthralling narrative that engenders perpetual inspiration and intrigue for posterity. Even in the contemporary epoch, the hallowed sepulcher of the renowned conqueror, the Gur-i-Amir, looms proudly in Samarkand, having undergone comprehensive restoration, assuming the role of a momentous tourist attraction that bears witness to the historical enigma of Amir Timur.

## **Chapter Five: Some Prominent Mughal Personalities.**

In this chapter, we will undertake a brief exploration of noteworthy Mughal ancestors and delve into the historical narratives surrounding their lives.

### **Genghis Khan**

Genghis Khan, also known as Chinggis Khan, Jenghiz, or Jinghis, and born as Temüjin near Lake Baikal, Mongolia, in 1162, was a remarkably skilled warrior and ruler whose conquests have earned him a place among the most renowned conquerors in history. Emerging from a humble and obscure background, Genghis Khan displayed exceptional military and leadership prowess, uniting the diverse nomadic tribes of Mongolia into a highly disciplined and centralized military state. Subsequently, he directed his ambitions towards the settled civilizations beyond the borders of his nomadic realm, initiating a series of plundering and conquest campaigns that ultimately extended his empire across vast territories, reaching from the Adriatic Sea to the Pacific coast of China, thus giving birth to the illustrious Mongol Empire.

Regarding historical documentation, the Secret History of the Mongols stands as the principal source of information about Genghis Khan's life, supplemented by non-Mongol sources. While many writers, including those affiliated with the

Mongols, acknowledged the grandeur of the empire, they also emphasized the extensive devastation left in the wake of the Mongol invasions. The terror these invasions evoked is evident, particularly among the settled societies that documented these events in writing. However, it is crucial to avoid perceiving the Mongol campaigns as mere haphazard marauding by savage bands. Instead, they were meticulously orchestrated endeavors, propelled by ambitious leaders, of whom Genghis Khan stands at the forefront. The invasions were not isolated incidents but part of a broader pattern of nomadic conquests that periodically erupted from the steppes, influencing the political dynamics and tensions between settled societies and nomadic tribes.

These sedentary and nomadic societies were interconnected and antagonistic, driven by contrasting ways of life. The nomads sought resources and luxuries from the south through trade, taxation of caravans, or armed raids. Conversely, settled societies in China relied on the steppe for specific resources and were preoccupied with defending against nomadic incursions. Periods of strong dynastic rule in China could extend their power over all Inner Asia, while weaker periods necessitated playing off one barbarian tribe against another to prevent the emergence of a dominant force. Likewise, the steppe experienced cycles of unity and fragmentation, as powerful leaders could subjugate rival tribes, and weakened nomads were eventually absorbed by their conquered subjects.

Genghis Khan's rise to power followed a tumultuous and precarious path. Born into the Borjigin clan, his father, Yesügei, faced challenges and tragedy, culminating in his poisoning by Tatars, a rival nomadic people. This left Temüjin and his family in a state of extreme poverty, surviving on meager sustenance. Nonetheless, even at a young age, Temüjin exhibited charisma and leadership qualities, attracting supporters who recognized his potential for greatness. Over time, he emerged as a formidable warrior, avenging the death of his father, and systematically eliminating rivals to consolidate power and create a unified Mongol nation. The turning point came in 1206 when a grand assembly proclaimed him as Genghis Khan, the Universal Ruler of the Mongols.

Genghis Khan meticulously organized his military, creating a disciplined and adaptable cavalry force that became the backbone of his conquests. He displayed military genius, capable of adapting to changing circumstances and employing psychological warfare to spread terror among his enemies. However, he also learned from settled societies, embracing more sophisticated approaches to governance and recognizing the value of literacy, peasants, and craftsmen in supporting his empire.

The Mongol conquests began with the expansion into China, leading to the defeat of the Jin empire, followed by the pursuit of a brutal campaign against the Khwarizmi empire in Central

Asia. Genghis Khan's conquests were vast and transformative, establishing the Mongol Empire as a formidable world power. His flexible and adaptable leadership style, combined with the organization, discipline, and ruthlessness of his military, contributed to his successes. However, while his fame and legacy endure, the true character of Genghis Khan remains complex and multifaceted, as evidenced by his military exploits, religious inclinations, and ability to inspire loyalty in his followers. The legacy of the Mongol Empire would endure beyond Genghis Khan's death, as his successors expanded and consolidated the empire, becoming the largest continental empire in medieval and modern history.

### **Mirza Babur Beg**

Babur, whose original name was Zahir al-Din Muhammad, was a prominent historical figure known for his pivotal role in establishing the Mughal dynasty in northern India during the early 16th century. Hailing from the Barlas tribe, which had Mongol origins but had assimilated Turkish language and customs due to prolonged residence in Turkish regions, Babur drew substantial support from the Turkish community and, as a result, the empire he founded bore a distinctly Turkish character.

Babur's lineage can be traced back to illustrious ancestors, including the famed Mongol conqueror Genghis Khan and the

Turkic conqueror Timur (Tamerlane). Specifically, he belonged to the Chagatai clan, a branch of the Timurid dynasty. His father, 'Umar Shaykh Mirza, ruled the modest principality of Fergana, situated north of the Hindu Kush mountain range. The Timurids, with their vast dominions, lacked a fixed law of succession, leading to a constant struggle for control among the princes of the dynasty. These claims often resulted in protracted and tumultuous conflicts.

Babur inherited the ambition of his forebears, and his initial endeavors were centered on reclaiming Samarkand, the ancient capital of Timur's empire, which had been lost to the Uzbeks under the rule of Muḥammad Shaybani Khan. Over a span of ten years (1494–1504), Babur made multiple attempts to recapture Samarkand, briefly succeeding in 1497 and 1501. Nevertheless, the Uzbeks, under the leadership of Muḥammad Shaybani Khan, proved formidable adversaries, culminating in Babur's significant defeat at Sar-e Pol. Subsequently, he lost both Samarkand and his principality of Fergana by 1504.

Despite these setbacks, Babur's charisma and astute leadership qualities inspired hope among his followers. In 1504, he skillfully took control of Kabul, Afghanistan, with the support of his loyal entourage. Ensuing rebellions and intrigues failed to dislodge him from his newly acquired stronghold. However, his final attempt to reclaim Samarkand in 1511–12 ended in

failure, prompting Babur to shift his focus towards other territories.

By 1522, Babur had redirected his ambitions towards Sindh (present-day Pakistan) and India, ultimately securing the strategically significant city of Kandahar (now in Afghanistan) along the route leading to Sindh. Babur's mastery in inspiring loyalty, managing family factions, and generating revenue from trade and agriculture, combined with his exceptional military acumen, eventually paved the way for his ascendancy as an esteemed commander and statesman during his reign as emperor from 1526 to 1530.

In 1519, Babur initiated his first incursion into India, finding the Punjab region under the dominion of Sultan Ibrahim Lodi of Delhi. However, it was Dawlat Khan Lodi, the governor of the province, who grew resentful of Sultan Ibrahim's attempts to diminish his authority. Over the course of the next five years, Babur invaded the Punjab on three additional occasions but faced complexities in navigating the intricate political landscape between Punjab and Delhi, preventing him from establishing a secure foothold. Nevertheless, the tumultuous state of affairs within the Delhi sultanate, marked by contentious quarrels, presented an opportune moment for an upheaval.



After launching a comprehensive attack on the region, Babur was compelled to return to Kabul due to an Uzbek invasion threatening his kingdom. However, a joint request for assistance from Alam Khan, Ibrahim's uncle, and Dawlat Khan prompted Babur to undertake his fifth expedition, which notably proved to be his first successful raid.

Babur's victories in India commenced in November 1525 when he confronted Sultan Ibrahim's forces at Panipat, approximately 50 miles (80 km) north of Delhi, on April 21, 1526. Despite Babur's army being significantly outnumbered, estimated at only 12,000 seasoned followers skilled in cavalry tactics and supported by new artillery procured from the Ottoman Turks, Sultan Ibrahim's vast forces of around 100,000 troops, including 100 elephants, were handicapped by antiquated tactics and internal discord. Babur's composure under fire, effective utilization of artillery, and adept Turkish wheeling maneuvers against a divided and disheartened enemy secured his victory, with Sultan Ibrahim falling in battle. In the aftermath, Babur swiftly occupied Delhi three days later and reached Agra on May 4, where he proceeded to create the Ram Bagh, a renowned garden along the Yamuna (Jumna) River.

Notwithstanding this initial triumph, Babur's situation seemed precarious as he confronted formidable challenges in the region. Stretching over 800 miles (1,300 km) from his base in Kabul, his small force faced militant Afghan chiefs throughout the

Ganges (Ganga) River valley, with substantial military potential. To the south, the prosperous kingdoms of Malwa and Gujarat posed additional threats, while Rana Sanga of Mewar (Udaipur) in Rajasthan led a potent confederacy that menaced the Muslim presence in northern India. Babur's followers, weary from the oppressive weather and hostile surroundings, were inclined to return home, akin to the actions of Timur's troops in the past. Babur employed a combination of coercion, reproach, promises, and appeals to persuade them to remain steadfast.

In facing Rana Sanga's challenge, Babur displayed his customary tactical acumen, employing a barrier of wagons in the center with openings for artillery and cavalry movements on the flanks. Utilizing wheeling cavalry charges and an effective artillery barrage, Babur's forces overwhelmed the Rajputs in the Battle of Khanua, 37 miles (60 km) west of Agra, on March 16, 1527. The defeat shattered the Rajputs, preventing them from rallying under a unified leader.

Babur's subsequent endeavors involved quelling defiant Afghans in the east, who had captured Lucknow while he faced Rana Sanga. Other Afghan factions aligned with Sultan Ibrahim's brother, Maḥmud Lodi, who had seized Bihar. Additionally, Rajput chieftains continued to resist Babur's authority, with the ruler of Chanderi being a notable adversary. Babur's strategic prowess was evident when he captured

Chanderi in January 1528, followed by a successful campaign in the east, driving out the Afghan captor of Lucknow and pressing on against Maḥmud Lodi's scattered forces. The Battle of Ghaghara, fought where the Ghaghara River meets the Ganges on May 6, 1529, marked Babur's third major victory in India, primarily attributable to the effective use of artillery and skilled boat maneuvers.

The establishment of the Mughal Empire marked a significant chapter in the history of India, and its foundation is rightly attributed to Babur. His dominions were now securely extended from Kandahar to the borders of Bengal, encompassing a vast expanse that stretched to the Rajput desert, Ranthambhor, Gwalior, and Chanderi forts in the south. However, this newfound empire was far from being settled, as it comprised a collection of quarreling chiefs and lacked a stable administration. Babur's achievement of an empire was a momentous feat, but the arduous task of pacification and organization remained ahead, making it a precarious inheritance that he passed on to his son Humayun.

In the year 1530, when Humayun fell gravely ill, Babur is reputed to have offered his own life to God in exchange for his son's recovery, performing a ritualistic vow by walking seven times around Humayun's sickbed. Remarkably, Humayun did recover, but Babur's health deteriorated, and he passed away the same year. Babur's legacy as the founder of the Mughal Empire

endured, even though the formidable task of consolidating and expanding the empire was primarily carried out by his illustrious grandson, Akbar. Babur's magnetic leadership served as a source of inspiration for the subsequent two generations of Mughal rulers.

Beyond his military and political achievements, Babur possessed other exceptional qualities. He was a talented Turki poet, a pursuit that would have earned him distinction independently of his political career. His love for nature manifested in the creation of gardens wherever he journeyed, enhancing picturesque spots with convivial gatherings. Moreover, Babur's prose memoirs, known as the Babur-Nameh, have garnered fame as a remarkable autobiography. Translated from Turki into Persian during the reign of Akbar in 1589, they later found their way into English translations, published as "Memoirs of Babur" in two volumes in 1921–22. These memoirs offer insight into the character of a ruler who stood out as exceptionally magnanimous for his era, distinguished by his cultivation, wit, adventurous spirit, and a keen appreciation for the beauty of the natural world.

### **Mirza Humayun Beg**

Humayun, also known as Nasir al-Din Muhammad, the second ruler of the Mughal dynasty in India, had a reign defined by his adventurous spirit but faced challenges in consolidating his

empire. He followed in the footsteps of his father, Babur, the founder of the Mughal dynasty, ascending to the throne and ruling from 1530 to 1540 and again from 1555 to 1556.

When Humayun inherited the empire, it was more of a hopeful aspiration than a firmly established reality. Despite Mughal victories in battles such as Panipat (1526), Khanua (1527), and the Ghaghara (1529), Afghan and Rajput forces remained skeptical and uneasy about Mughal supremacy. Bahadur Shah, the ruler of Gujarat, encouraged by Afghan and Mughal exiles, posed a significant challenge to the Mughals in Rajasthan. While Humayun managed to occupy Gujarat in 1535, the threat persisted until Bahadur's death in 1537. Additionally, Sher Shah of Sur, a capable Afghan leader, consolidated power in Bihar and Bengal, emerging as a formidable adversary. He defeated Humayun at the battles of Chausa in 1539 and Kannauj in 1540, ultimately driving Humayun out of India.

These defeats left Humayun in dire circumstances, becoming a homeless wanderer seeking support from various regions, including Sindh and Marwar. During this tumultuous period, his renowned son, Akbar, was born in 1542. Seeking refuge in Iran, Humayun received military assistance from Shah Tahmasp, allowing him to successfully recapture Kandahar in 1545 and regain control of Kabul from his disloyal brother, Kamran. After a series of victories, Humayun managed to capture Lahore in February 1555, capitalizing on internal strife

among Sher Shah's descendants. He then defeated Sikandar Sur, a rebellious Afghan governor of the Punjab, at Sirhind, leading to his regaining control of Delhi and Agra in July of the same year.

Unfortunately, Humayun's reign met a tragic end when he suffered a fatal injury from falling down the staircase of his library. Subsequently, his tomb was constructed in Delhi, becoming the first of the great Mughal architectural masterpieces and a symbol of his enduring impact on the region's history and culture. The significance of his tomb was recognized with its designation as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1993.

### **Mirza Akbar Beg**

Akbar, the most illustrious of the Mughal emperors in India, reigned from 1556 to 1605 and significantly expanded Mughal dominion across the Indian subcontinent. To ensure the unity of his vast empire, Akbar pursued policies that garnered the loyalty of non-Muslim populations within his realm. He implemented reforms to strengthen and centralize the administration, as well as to streamline the financial system and tax collection processes. While remaining devoted to Islam, Akbar displayed an active interest in other religions and encouraged religious discussions among Hindus, Parsis, Christians, and Muslims in his court. Despite being illiterate, he

fostered an environment of intellectual and artistic flourishing, supporting scholars, poets, painters, and musicians, thus making his court a vibrant center of culture.

Born as Abu al-Faḥḥ Jalal al-Din Muḥammad Akbar, he descended from a lineage that combined Turkish, Mongol, and Iranian heritage—three dominant groups within the political elites of northern India during medieval times. Notable ancestors included Timur (Tamerlane) and Genghis Khan. Akbar's father, Humayun, faced political challenges and had to seek refuge in the Sindh region (now in Pakistan) after being driven out of Delhi by the Afghan usurper Shēr Shah of Sur. With the assistance of troops from the Shah of Iran, Humayun eventually reclaimed his throne in 1555, and at the age of 13, Akbar was appointed as the governor of the Punjab region.

Following Humayun's death in 1556, Akbar's authority was contested, with his governors losing control of several crucial regions, including Delhi, to Hemu, a Hindu minister who declared himself the ruler. However, the Mughal forces defeated Hemu at the Second Battle of Panipat on November 5, 1556, securing Akbar's accession to the throne. At the beginning of his reign, Akbar's rule was confined to the Punjab and the vicinity of Delhi. Under the guidance of his chief minister, Bayram Khan, Akbar gradually consolidated and expanded his authority. After Bayram Khan's retirement in 1560, Akbar assumed sole governance, initially under the

influence of his household advisors but later as an absolute monarch.

As time progressed, Akbar's rule continued to strengthen, and his reign witnessed remarkable accomplishments and significant territorial expansion. His policies of religious tolerance, administrative reforms, and cultural patronage earned him a lasting legacy as one of India's most visionary and successful rulers.

Akbar's imperial expansion was a remarkable chapter in the history of the Mughal Empire. He employed a blend of conciliation and conquest in his dealings with various regions, adopting pragmatic policies to consolidate and extend his authority. Malwa, a region of strategic significance due to its control over the route through the Vindhya Range to the Deccan plateau, was among the early targets of Akbar's military campaigns. In 1561, he successfully captured Malwa, gaining access to its fertile agricultural lands and reinforcing his influence in the region. Tackling the fiercely independent Rajputs of Rajputana posed a different challenge.

Akbar pursued a policy of conciliation and conquest, recognizing the importance of their cooperation. In 1562, when Raja Bihari Mal of Amber faced internal disputes, he sought an alliance with Akbar by offering his daughter's hand in marriage. Akbar accepted the proposal, and in return, the Rajput rulers



acknowledged Akbar's suzerainty and their sons prospered in the Mughal service. This approach of incorporating Rajput chiefs into the Mughal administration by allowing them to retain their territories, provided they recognized Akbar's sovereignty, paid tribute, supplied troops when needed, and formed marriage alliances with him, proved successful. Those who refused to acknowledge Akbar's supremacy, as in the case of the fortress of Chitor in Mewar, faced severe consequences, with Akbar resorting to decisive measures such as massacres to assert his authority.

One of the noteworthy aspects of Akbar's rule was his emphasis on Hindu and particularly Rajput participation in his government. Rajput princes rose to prominent positions, serving as generals and provincial governors in the Mughal administration. Akbar reduced discrimination against non-Muslims by abolishing taxes on pilgrims and the tax imposed on non-Muslims instead of military service. This approach fostered a high level of cooperation and involvement from Hindus in the administration, contributing to the further expansion of Akbar's territories.

In 1573, Akbar's forces conquered Gujarat, a region vital for India's trade with western Asia, and subsequently moved eastward towards Bengal. Bengal's unique geography, characterized by an intricate network of rivers prone to flooding during the monsoon, made it challenging to govern from Delhi.

However, after subjugating Bengal in 1575, Akbar effectively annexed the region following the suppression of a rebellion in 1576.

Towards the later years of his reign, Akbar initiated a fresh wave of conquests. He subjugated the Kashmir region in 1586, Sindh in 1591, and Kandahar (Afghanistan) in 1595. Expanding south of the Vindhya Range, Mughal troops ventured into the Deccan, adding Khandesh, Berar, and part of Ahmadnagar to Akbar's empire by 1601. Despite these impressive conquests and achievements, Akbar faced challenges from within his family, notably from his son Prince Salim (later Emperor Jahangir), who harbored ambitions for power and caused unrest during Akbar's final years. Nonetheless, Akbar's reign remains an era of significant territorial expansion and cultural synthesis, leaving a lasting impact on the history of India and the Mughal Empire.

Akbar, the greatest of the Mughal emperors, introduced extensive administrative reforms that aimed to strengthen his empire and foster cooperation among diverse populations. To combat disintegration tendencies prevalent in premodern states, Akbar instituted two significant changes.

Firstly, he implemented a policy wherein every officer was appointed and promoted directly by the emperor himself, reducing the influence of individual commanders. Secondly,

Akbar abolished the traditional distinction between the nobility of the sword and that of the pen, giving civil administrators military ranks and making them as dependent on the emperor as army officers. The new ranks were systematically graded, ranging from commanders of 10 persons to commanders of 5,000 persons, with higher ranks reserved for Mughal princes. Officers were compensated either in cash from the imperial treasury or through grants of land from which they collected revenue, retaining a portion as their salary and remitting the balance to the treasury. This practice enhanced officers' dependence on the emperor while also encouraging them to extract as much revenue as possible from the transient peasant populations under their control. Politically, this system allowed Akbar to offer attractive careers to ambitious and influential individuals, earning the loyalty and services of many Rajput princes.

To support these reforms, Akbar established a centralized financial system, with civil administrators (dewan) working alongside provincial governors (subadar, later nawab) to oversee revenue collection and accounting, reporting directly to the emperor. To prevent abuses, Akbar reorganized the network of news writers who sent regular reports of important events to the emperor. Despite these efforts, accounts from travelers indicate that Indian peasants remained impoverished, while the official elite enjoyed significant wealth. Akbar generously patronized artists, poets, musicians, and scholars, and under his

rule, luxury industries thrived. He also supported state workshops for the production of high-quality textiles and ornaments.

Akbar's personality was captivating, and he maintained an opulent court that emphasized his regal stature. He projected an image of grandeur to the public, standing at an open window each morning to be seen and respected by the people. Although illiterate, Akbar possessed a powerful and original mind. He engaged in religious discussions with Christians, Muslims, Hindus, and Parsis, earning the respect of theologians and scholars. Akbar's open-mindedness and curiosity led to the development of the Divine Faith (Din-e Ilahi), a syncretic faith that incorporated elements from various religions, but it is important to note that political motives should not be solely ascribed to these developments. Many historians contend that the system developed by Akbar was more spiritual in essence than an actual religious cult, as alleged by some detractors. Akbar's approach to religion was not about defying Islam but about transcending dogma and fostering a deeper, more inclusive spiritual understanding. His doctrine of *Din-i Ilahi* (Religion of God) was a bold attempt to harmonize the diverse religious landscape of his empire, drawing from elements of Islam, Hinduism, Christianity, Jainism, and Zoroastrianism. Far from being a rejection of Islamic tenets, Akbar's vision sought to cultivate a spiritual unity that could transcend the sectarian divides plaguing the subcontinent. His

emphasis on Sulh-e-Kul (universal peace) reflected a profound spiritual maturity—a recognition that truth and divinity could manifest through multiple paths. This perspective, rooted in a deep sense of justice and moral integrity, allowed Akbar to establish a framework where dialogue and coexistence took precedence over religious orthodoxy. Critics who label his system as heretical overlook the philosophical depth and spiritual gravitas that defined his reign. Akbar's spiritual syncretism was not an abandonment of Islam but a visionary effort to elevate human understanding above the rigid confines of sectarianism and division.

Akbar's patronage extended to the arts, architecture, and intellectual pursuits. He commissioned translations of Sanskrit classics into Persian, received European pictures brought by Jesuits with enthusiasm, and encouraged the development of Mughal painting style, characterized by a vivid treatment of the physical world. His capital, Fatehpur Sikri, was a testament to the resources at his disposal and the cultural synthesis he promoted.

Akbar's reign exemplified the stimulating effects of cultural encounters and has been portrayed as a model for future governments—strong, benevolent, tolerant, and enlightened. Akbar's understanding of the need for social support and his ability to satisfy it played a crucial role in effective governance in the vast and diverse land of India.

## **Mirza Jahangir Beg**

Jahangir, born in 1569, held the esteemed title of the fourth Mughal Emperor in India and was a devoted patron of the arts throughout his 22-year reign. Renowned for his open-mindedness and liberal approach to his Muslim faith, Jahangir displayed a profound passion for painting, architecture, and the finer aspects of artistic expression. As a ruler, he was both accomplished and compassionate, showing genuine concern for the welfare of his Indian subjects. He held great reverence for Hindu and Muslim saints and worked to improve societal conditions without disrupting traditional customs. However, despite his benevolent nature, Jahangir nurtured military aspirations, aspiring to conquer Transoxiana, the historical center of early Timurid governance.

Jahangir's origins were steeped in significance, being the eldest son of Akbar, an illustrious figure in Islamic history, and his Rajput wife, Jodha Bai. His upbringing was meticulously attended to, with utmost care and affection. His education took place in the new capital, Fatehpur-Sikri, where he received instruction in Persian, Turki, Arabic, Hindi, arithmetic, history, and geography. Among his mentors, Abdur Rahim Khan Khana, a highly versatile genius, soldier, and successful diplomat, left a profound impact on the young prince. Under his guidance, Prince Salim (Jahangir) also honed his skills in verse composition.

Eager to prepare the prince for his future role as a ruler, he underwent comprehensive training in both civil and military administration, beginning with his involvement in the Kabul expedition of 1581. During this campaign, he led a regiment of troops and later conducted independent military missions. Gradually rising through the ranks, he was eventually appointed as an army officer with command over 12,000 men. However, despite his promising potential, the prince developed vices at an early age, succumbing to a life of luxury. Moreover, his impatience and ambitious designs to ascend the throne while his father, Akbar, was still alive created a rift between father and son. In an attempt to cement his legacy and find a reliable successor, Akbar's favorite courtier, Abul Fazl, introduced the concept of a brotherhood of "seekers" who revered the emperor as divinely inspired. The prince, troubled by this plan and driven by his ambition, had Abul Fazl assassinated in 1602. The loss of his friend deeply affected Akbar, but he had no other dependable heir. Fearing for the continuity of the dynasty, Akbar reluctantly declared his eldest son as his successor, placing the imperial turban on his head, just before his death in 1605.

Taking the throne at the age of 36, the prince assumed the name Nur-ud-din Muhammad Jahangir. However, his reign was not without challenges. After assuming the throne, Jahangir was confronted with the impatience and rebellion of his own son,

Khusrau. When Prince Khusrau's forces were defeated by the imperial troops near Jalandar, he was captured and subjected to a humiliating ordeal. Jahangir ordered his son to ride along a street lined with the impaled bodies of his recent supporters, causing Khusrau immense humiliation. Prince Khusrau's revolt lacked the necessary resources and support to be successful. He did not possess the capability to organize an effective uprising, and the people did not show any desire to have him as their ruler. Consequently, his rebellion was quelled by Jahangir's forces.

In the aftermath of the rebellion, Jahangir turned his attention to Sikh Guru Arjun, who had provided financial aid to the rebellious Prince Khusrau. As a consequence, Jahangir fined Guru Arjun for the offence of involvement. However, Guru Arjun refused to pay the fine. As a result, he was subjected to torture until his death. The historical evidence does indicate that during Jahangir's reign, the persecution of Sikh religious leaders occurred primarily when they became involved in political matters or activities that challenged the authority of the Mughal Empire. Jahangir's approach to governance was generally tolerant, and he did not target the Sikh community merely based on their religious beliefs. It was when Sikh leaders, like Guru Arjun, were perceived to be supporting rebellious or political activities that they faced punitive measures. Richard H. Davis and other historians have highlighted the evolving role of the Sikh community during that



time, transforming into a formidable social group. As the Sikh Gurus gained influence and a following, they became more engaged in the political conflicts of north India. Guru Arjan, for example, positioned himself as a leader of the Sikhs and took sides in Mughal dynastic disputes. His involvement in such political matters made him vulnerable to the consequences of backing the losing side, which ultimately led to his suffering.

The view presented by Beni Prasad in the early twentieth century also emphasizes the political nature of the events surrounding Guru Arjan's execution. According to this perspective, Guru Arjan made the mistake of blessing Prince Khusrau during his distress, an opportunity that was seized by the Guru's enemies. They capitalized on the situation and presented the Guru's actions as "treason and impiety" to Jahangir, exaggerating the circumstances with malice and fanatical hatred. In essence, the persecution of Sikhs during Jahangir's rule was not a systematic religious persecution but rather a response to their involvement in political issues that posed a threat to the stability of the Mughal Empire. This distinction is important in understanding the historical context of the relationship between the Mughal rulers and the Sikh community during that period. Despite this, Jahangir aimed to dispense justice fairly, symbolized by the establishment of a golden "chain of justice" outside the Agra fort. Anyone denied justice could pull the chain to get the emperor's attention and seek redressal of grievances.

Amid internal disturbances in India, the Shah of Persia sought to seize the fortress of Kandahar, which held significant strategic and commercial value during the Middle Ages. The fort had changed hands between Persia and India several times, with Mughal attempts to recapture it ending in failure. These setbacks had contributed to a decline in the Empire's prestige. Jahangir pursued his father's imperialistic policy, aiming to conquer the entire country. In 1605, he sent his second son to subdue Rana Amar Singh, a Hindu ruler, and capture the formidable fort of Chittor. The Emperor dispatched another force in 1608, and eventually, a peace treaty was signed in 1615. Recognizing Jahangir's suzerainty, the Rana had his territory, including Chittor, restored. This treaty marked a significant milestone in the relationship between Mewar and Delhi, as it was the first time a ruler of the Sisodia dynasty openly professed allegiance to a Mughal ruler, ending a prolonged struggle. In recognition of this loyalty, Jahangir placed marble statues of the Rana and his son in the gardens of his palace in Agra.

Continuing Akbar's policy, Jahangir's Deccan strategy considered the north and south as indivisible parts of one country. His ambition was to annex Ahmadnagar and possibly the remaining independent states of Bijapur and Golkonda. In 1613, he placed his son, Prince Khurram, in command of the army and ordered him to lead campaigns against Rajput forces

in Mewar, Kanga, and the Deccani sultanates. The siege of Kanga in 1629 was the most notable military achievement of Jahangir's reign, leading him to visit the conquered region and erect mosques there. Despite some success, complete victory over Ahmadnagar proved challenging due to the strength of the Deccan kingdom and the inferiority of Mughal weaponry. The Mughals faced formidable opposition from an able Abyssinian named Malik Ambar, who skillfully trained the mountaineers of Maharashtra in guerrilla tactics. His efforts, later perfected by the Hindu ruler Shivaji, posed a significant challenge to Emperor Aurangzeb. In 1616, when the Mughals had partial success, Prince Khurram was rewarded with the title of Shah Jahan ("King of the World"). However, the Deccan remained unconquered despite these efforts.

During the first half of Jahangir's reign, two significant figures emerged in the Mughal court: his favorite wife, Nur Jahan, and his third son, Khurram, whose mother was a Rajput princess. Nur Jahan was a woman of exceptional energy and talents, and under her influence, the Mughal court in Agra became a hub for Persian poets, artists, architects, and musicians. She wielded significant political power in India, but this gave rise to tensions with her stepson, Shah Jahan, who was vying for his father's position as the successor to the throne. To sideline Shah Jahan, Nur Jahan persuaded Jahangir to send him away from the court and engage in military service in the Deccan against rival kings. Shah Jahan complied begrudgingly, but he took his younger

brother, Khusrau, with him. When rumors spread about Jahangir's deteriorating health and impending death, Shah Jahan took drastic action to eliminate Khusrau, who posed a potential threat to his claim to the throne. In 1623, Shah Jahan openly rebelled against his father and marched towards Agra. Nur Jahan rallied an imperial army to confront him, but Shah Jahan managed to evade them and led the authorities on a three-year chase across southeast India before finally returning to Jahangir's fold.

Jahangir's court was known for its impressive gatherings and religious discussions. He showed equal respect to Christians, Jews, and Muslims, allowing Hindu festivals to be celebrated. Although Jahangir was courteous to the Jesuits due to his passion for art, he did not convert to Christianity. His policy, much like his father Akbar's, was one of general tolerance towards Christianity, and he contributed generously to the construction of churches. During Jahangir's reign, English trade with the Mughal empire began to take shape, facilitated by figures like Captain William Hawkins and Sir Thomas Roe. The Portuguese, who had previously dominated the Indian export market, faced a decline in power, enabling the English to secure trade opportunities. Despite notable military victories, such as the capture of Kangra fortress in Punjab, Jahangir's reign faced ongoing challenges, including rebellions incited by his wife Nur Jahan and the pressure from Persia in the northwest. Shah

Jahan's rebellion, in particular, caused significant damage to the empire, straining Jahangir's rule.

During Jahangir's reign, notable architectural works flourished. His powerful wife, Nur Jahan, commissioned the exquisite tomb of her father, Itimad-ud-Daulah, in Agra, finished in 1628. This tomb, adorned with intricate inlay work on white marble, showcased the distinctive features of Mughal architecture—extensive use of white marble and decorative inlay—which would become hallmarks of the era. Jahangir's personal interest in art led to the high quality of paintings and coins during his reign. Having grown up in the artistic atmosphere of Akbar's studio, he was knowledgeable about artistic techniques and could distinguish different artists' work. He encouraged a new style of political allegory in art, featuring magnificent paintings, such as those celebrating peace with the Persian neighbor, Shah Abbas. Toward the end of Jahangir's reign, his wife Nur Jahan and her brother, Asaf Khan, played prominent roles in the government. They clashed with the powerful Mahabat Khan, leading to a turbulent period. Despite his troubles, Jahangir found solace in Kashmir, where he had developed magnificent gardens, like the Shalimar Bagh, featuring pavilions, carved pillars, and beautiful pools. Jahangir's death in 1627 resulted in a power struggle between his son-in-law Shah Jahan, supported by Asaf Khan, and Nur Jahan. Shah Jahan ultimately claimed the throne, and Nur Jahan retired to solitude in Lahore.

Historical views of Jahangir vary, with some European historians considering him fickle and tyrannical, while Indian authors see him as a just and noble ruler. He was highly educated and cultured, as evident from his autobiography, which reflects his interests in subjects like botany and zoology. Under his patronage, significant buildings were renovated, such as Akbar's tomb at Sikandra and a grand mosque in Lahore. However, he lacked the visionary genius of Akbar and mostly maintained the administrative machinery established by his father. He followed his father's liberal policies, allowing Hindus to hold higher public positions and striving to promote social justice and administrative efficiency, although not always with complete success. Overall, Jahangir's reign witnessed prosperity in agriculture, industries, and commerce, contributing to the well-being of his people.

### **Mirza Shah Jahan Beg**

Shah Jahan, also known as Shah Jahan or Shah Jehan, was the Mughal emperor of India from 1628 to 1658 and is renowned for constructing the Taj Mahal. He was the third son of Emperor Jahangir and the Rajput princess Manmati. In 1612, he married Arjumand Banu Begum, the niece of Jahangir's wife Nur Jahan, and became part of the influential Nur Jahan clique during Jahangir's reign.

In his pursuit of the throne, Shah Jahan rebelled against his father in 1622 but later reconciled with him in 1625. After Jahangir's death in 1627, with the support of Aṣaf Khan, Nur Jahan's brother, Shah Jahan proclaimed himself emperor in Agra in February 1628.

His reign was marked by successful campaigns against the Deccan states, annexing Ahmadnagar and making Golconda and Vijayapura tributaries. The Mughal power also extended briefly in the northwest, with the capture of Kandahar in 1638. However, subsequent attempts to hold on to the region failed, as Kandahar was eventually retaken by the Persians.

Shah Jahan had a passion for building, and during his reign, he oversaw the construction of several impressive structures. Notably, the Taj Mahal, a mausoleum built in memory of his favorite queen, Arjumand (Mumtaz Maḥal), stands as the masterpiece of his reign. He also built the Red Fort and another Jamia Masjid in Delhi, in addition to fostering great literary and artistic activity in his court.

Indian writers generally view Shah Jahan as an ideal Muslim monarch. However, despite the splendor of his court, his military expeditions and attempts to recover certain territories brought the empire to near bankruptcy. He was more orthodox in his religious beliefs than Jahangir and Akbar but less so than

his son Aurangzeb. Shah Jahan ruled with relative tolerance toward his Hindu subjects.

In 1657, a succession struggle arose among his four sons, with Aurangzeb emerging as the victor and declaring himself emperor in 1658. Shah Jahan fell ill in September 1657 and was confined in the Agra Fort until his death. His reign, while marked by great achievements in architecture and art, also set in motion influences that contributed to the eventual decline of the Mughal Empire.

### **Mirza Aurangzeb Alamgir Beg**

Aurangzeb, also known as Aurangzib, held the kingly title Alamgir and was originally named Muḥi al-Din Muḥammad. He was the emperor of India from 1658 to 1707 and is considered the last of the great Mughal emperors. During his rule, the Mughal Empire reached its greatest territorial extent, although his policies also contributed to its eventual dissolution.

In his early life, Aurangzeb was the third son of Emperor Shah Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal, for whom the Taj Mahal was constructed. He grew up as a serious and devout youth, adhering to the prevailing Muslim orthodoxy and distinguishing himself from the royal Mughal traits of indulgence in sensuality and drunkenness. Early on, he displayed military and administrative abilities and harbored a taste for power, leading



to rivalry with his elder brother, Dara Shikoh, who was designated as the successor to the throne by their father. From 1636, Aurangzeb held several important appointments and served with distinction, commanding troops against the Uzbeks and Persians (1646–47) and serving as viceroy of the Deccan provinces (1636–44, 1654–58), where he brought the two Muslim Deccan kingdoms under Mughal control.

The tension between Aurangzeb and Dara Shikoh during Shah Jahan's illness in 1657 made a war of succession seem unavoidable. Despite Shah Jahan's unexpected recovery, the rivalry between the brothers had escalated to a point of no return. In the power struggle (1657–59) that ensued, Aurangzeb displayed tactical military skills, strategic acumen, and ruthless determination. He decisively defeated Dara Shikoh in the Battle of Samugarh in May 1658 and imprisoned his father in the Agra palace. In securing his position, Aurangzeb caused the death of one brother and executed two other brothers, a son, and a nephew.

Aurangzeb's reign can be divided into two nearly equal parts. In the first phase, lasting until around 1680, he served as a capable monarch in a diverse empire. While respected for his vigor and skill, he was disliked for his ruthlessness. During this period, he focused on safeguarding the northwest from Persian and Central Asian threats, paying less attention to the Maratha chief Shivaji, who had twice plundered the port of Surat (1664,

1670). Aurangzeb followed his great-grandfather Akbar's approach to conquest: defeat enemies, reconcile them, and integrate them into imperial service. Thus, Shivaji was defeated, called to Agra for reconciliation (1666), and given an imperial rank. However, the plan did not work as expected, and Shivaji fled to the Deccan, where he later died in 1680.

After around 1680, there was a significant shift in Aurangzeb's approach and policies. He transformed from being a seasoned statesman governing a diverse kingdom to a pious ruler of an Islamic state. The Marathas and other southern Muslim kingdoms were targeted for annexation rather than containment. The reimposition of the *jizya* tax on non-Muslims in 1679 was a clear sign of this change, which was followed by a Rajput revolt in 1680-81, with support from Aurangzeb's third son, Akbar. Hindus still served the empire, but their enthusiasm waned. Aurangzeb's conquests of the Deccan kingdoms of Bijapur and Golconda in 1686-87 led to an economic crisis, worsened by wars with the Marathas. The latter part of Aurangzeb's life was occupied with laborious and futile sieges of forts in the Maratha hill country.

As Aurangzeb focused on the south, the administration in the north weakened, exacerbated by pressure on the land from Mughal grantees paid through land revenue assignments. Agrarian discontent often manifested as religious movements, as seen in the cases of the Satnamis and the Sikhs in Punjab. In

1675, Aurangzeb executed the Sikh Guru Tegh Bahadur, leading to open rebellion by Guru Gobind Singh for the rest of Aurangzeb's reign. Other agrarian revolts, like those of the Jats, were primarily secular in nature.

According to Official Mughal records detailing the events leading to Guru Tegh Bahadur's assassination in 1675, he was known to travel with a substantial following. As the institution of guruhood gained political and material influence, the Sikh gurus started to be viewed as political adversaries by the smaller kingdoms within the Mughal empire. Even the Mughal emperor was aware of their growing power, marking a departure from the earlier days of political obscurity during Guru Nanak's time. Various accounts offer reasons for Guru Tegh Bahadur's assassination on the orders of Aurangzeb.

According to Sikh tradition, the guru stood up for the rights of Kashmiri Pandits, who sought his help in persuading the emperor to revoke a recently imposed tax known as jizya. In response to his son, Guru Gobind Singh's persuasion, Guru Tegh Bahadur journeyed to Delhi to protect the Kashmiri Pandits. However, at the Mughal court, he faced mockery and was asked to demonstrate his guruhood through a miracle. He wrote a protective spell on a piece of paper and tied it around his neck, assuring the Mughal authorities that as long as the spell remained intact, his head would not be severed even if the executioner's blade struck his neck. Tragically, when the

executioner's blade did fall, it severed the guru's head. The magic spell he had written, when later opened by the Mughal authorities, read, "He gave his head, not his secret."

However, colonial historians, such as Joseph Davey Cunningham, offer an alternative explanation for the assassination of Guru Tegh Bahadur. To comprehend the political motives behind the event, one must consider the historical context surrounding Tegh Bahadur's appointment as the Sikh guru. Initially overlooked by his father, Guru Hargobind, Guru Tegh Bahadur assumed leadership of the Sikh community following the death of his seven-year-old brother, Guru Har Krishan.

During Guru Har Krishan's short tenure, his elder brother, Ram Rai, harbored ambitions for the guruhood and conspired against him. Ram Rai lobbied prominent Sikh leaders to persuade the community that he was the rightful spiritual successor of Nanak's Sikhism. Guru Har Krishan's ambiguous command on his deathbed was interpreted as Guru Tegh Bahadur's appointment as the next guru.

Taking charge of the situation, Guru Tegh Bahadur sought to establish new political alliances and increase his revenue base to compete with rival claims to the guruhood. According to Cunningham, the guru and his followers engaged in activities like plundering between Hansi and Sutlej, which made them

unpopular with the peasantry. Additionally, Guru Tegh Bahadur collaborated with a Muslim zealot named Adam Hafiz and levied contributions on wealthy Hindus and Muslims.

Historical accounts also mention that the guru offered asylum to fugitives. One complaint against him, brought to the emperor's attention, came from Ram Rai. Like his predecessor, Guru Har Krishan, Guru Tegh Bahadur was accused of being a "pretender to power."

Guru Tegh Bahadur became the second Sikh guru to be assassinated by a Mughal emperor. Almost 70 years earlier, in 1606, Guru Arjan, the fifth Sikh guru, was killed near the river Ravi, facing the Lahore fort, on the orders of Jahangir. This assassination marked a pivotal moment in Sikh history, as it triggered a transformation of the guruhood from a non-violent spiritual movement to the militarized religious movement led by Guru Hargobind, the son and spiritual successor of Guru Arjan. The seeds for the Khalsa, which defines the Sikh community's present form, were sown during the time of Guru Gobind Singh, the son and successor of Guru Tegh Bahadur.

Aurangzeb managed to maintain the Mughal Empire for nearly 50 years and even extended its reach in the south to include regions like Tanjore and Trichinopoly. However, beneath this outward appearance of strength, the empire faced significant weaknesses. The continuous Maratha campaign drained

imperial resources, while the growing militancy of the Sikhs and Jats posed threats in the north. Aurangzeb's new Islamic policies alienated Hindu sentiment and undermined the support of the Rajputs. Additionally, the financial burden on the land strained the entire administrative framework. When Aurangzeb passed away after ruling for nearly 49 years, the empire was not yet in a state of decline, but it was confronted with numerous menacing problems. The subsequent rulers, including his son Bahadur Shah I, were unable to effectively address these challenges, ultimately leading to the collapse of the Mughal Empire in the mid-18th century.

### **Mirza Darashikoh**

Sultan Muhammad Dara Shikoh (AH 1024–1069/1615–1659 CE), the eldest son of Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal, was born in the city of Ajmer. His political career commenced in 1634 when he received the prestigious rank of commanding 1,200 infantry and 6,000 horsemen. By 1657, Dara's command had grown significantly, and he led an army of 100,000 troops. Later that year, due to his father's illness, Dara was appointed as the regent to oversee the affairs of the empire. However, Dara's military endeavors were not successful. His three expeditions against the Persian army in 1639, 1642, and 1653 ended in humiliation, and he missed the opportunity to capture Kandahar. Moreover, in the war of succession, his brothers Murad and Aurangzeb refused to

accept him as the new regent. Dara suffered two significant defeats, first against Murad and Aurangzeb in Samugarh, and then a few months later, his final defeat at the hands of Aurangzeb in Deorai. Despite his bravery as a warrior, Dara's lack of diplomatic and leadership skills led to the loss of his crown, forcing him to seek refuge in Dadar. Tragically, his host, Malik Jiwan, betrayed him, and he was handed over to the new emperor, Aurangzeb, leading to his untimely and ignoble end. In August 1659, Dara was paraded in disgrace through the streets of Delhi and ultimately beheaded.

Dara Shikoh was a great patron of arts, architecture, and literature, and he was also a highly skilled calligrapher, artist, poet, writer, and translator. His interest in Sufism began at a young age, and he seemed particularly drawn to the Qadiriyya Sufi order. Around 1640, he was formally initiated into the Qadiriyya silsila by Mulla Shah, and from then on, he remained devoted to this spiritual path, adopting the pen name "Qadiri" when he expressed himself as a poet.

Dara's passion for Sufism inspired him to start writing. His first four works focused on Sufism, each serving a distinct purpose. "Safinat al-Awliya" (Ship of the Saints) contained over four hundred short biographies of Sufi saints from various orders. "Sakinat al-Awliya" (Tranquility of the Saints) chronicled the lives of twenty-eight Qadiri Sufis, most of whom were contemporaries of Dara. "Risala-i Haqq numa" (The Compass

of the Truth) was a manual designed to explain the theory and practice of Sufi meditation. The fourth work, "Ḥasanat al-Arifin" (Merits of the Gnostics), compiled ecstatic utterances of Sufi saints, spanning from the eleventh century to Dara's time. Through his writings on Sufism, it is evident that he fervently embraced the doctrine of wahdat al-wujud (oneness of being) and advocated for an inclusive and harmonious approach to other religions. Dara Shikoh also translated remarkable Sanskrit works into Persian, further showcasing his interest in interfaith exploration. He was an enthusiastic scholar who deeply engaged with different religious traditions and sought to bridge the gap between them. His multifaceted contributions to art, literature, and Sufism left a lasting impact on Mughal India's cultural landscape.

Indeed, Dara Shikoh's open-minded and inclusive Sufi attitude led him to engage in the study of Hinduism. He had meaningful dialogues with a Hindu yogi named Baba Lal Das, discussing various Hindu concepts and comparing them with Islam. These conversations were later compiled into a work called "Su' Al-o-jawab Dara Shukoh-o-Baba Lal Das" (The Dialogue between Dara Shikoh and Baba Lal Das). As a result of his interactions with Baba Lal and other Sufis, Dara wrote "Majma' al-Baḥrayn" (The Mingling of the Two Oceans). This work represents one of the most significant attempts to reconcile Islam and Hinduism in the history of Indian thought, particularly in the field of comparative religion. Despite its



ecumenical nature, "Majma'" became one of Dara's most controversial works.

Dara Shikoh's scholarly efforts in understanding Hinduism extended to translating fifty Upanishads from Sanskrit into Persian. He titled this compilation "Sirr-i Akbar" (The Greatest Veil). The French scholar Anquetil Duperron later translated Dara's Persian rendering into French and Latin, introducing his work to Europe. In the preface to "Sirr-i Akbar," Dara assigned the Upanishads the status of "kitab-i maknun" (a well-guarded book), a status previously reserved by Muslim scholars only for the Qur'an. For Dara, the Upanishads and the Qur'an represented two facets of the same truth.

Additionally, Dara Shikoh undertook other scholarly endeavors in Hinduism, including translating the Bhagavad Gita and commissioning a translation of the "Jog Bashist," also known as "Minaj al-Salkin" (The Path of the Wayfarers). In the preface to "Jog," he praised the Prophet Muhammad while admiring the Hindu avatar Ramchand. This demonstrated that, for Dara, both personalities held equal significance as spiritual guides. Dara's efforts to forge a new relationship between Hinduism and Islam stand as a remarkable ecumenical achievement in the history of Mughal India. His work reflected a deep appreciation for different religious traditions and a sincere attempt to find common ground between them.

## **Mirza Haidar Ali Beg**

Mirza Haider Dughlat's entry into Kashmir stands out as a significant and defining moment in Central Asian history, solidifying his status as a powerful figure in the region's political and military landscape. His Kashmir campaign was marked by strategic brilliance, fierce resistance, and ultimately a complex legacy of conquest, governance, and cultural influence. **Mirza Muhammad Haidar Dughlat Beg** was a key historical figure of Chagatai Turco-Mongol descent, known for his military leadership, governance of Kashmir, and contributions to historical writing. He belonged to the Dughlat dynasty and was a cousin of Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire, through their maternal lineage. Haidar wrote in both Persian and Chagatai, blending personal memoir with historical narrative in his significant work, *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* (History of Rashid). Mirza Muhammad Haidar was born into the distinguished Dughlat Amir family, a hereditary ruling dynasty in Kashgaria (modern-day Xinjiang). His father, Muhammad Hussain Mirza Kurkan, was married to Khub Nigar Khanim, the daughter of Yunus Khan, which linked Haidar to the lineage of Chagatai Khans. His ancestry included influential figures such as Amir Sayyid Ali Kurkan, Amir Sayyid Ahmad, and Amir Khudaidad, who held prominent political and military roles in Central Asia.

Haidar's political and military career began under the patronage of Sultan Said Khan of Kashgar. In July 1532, Dughlat was tasked with a campaign against the Tibetans, accompanying Said Khan's second son, Iskander. The Kashgar army, 5000-strong, successfully occupied Nubra before moving toward Leh. However, as the harsh desert winter set in and Iskander suffered from *damgir* (likely altitude sickness due to oxygen depletion), the army was split. Iskander, with 1000 men, moved toward Baltistan, while Dughlat proceeded toward Kashmir with the remaining force. It is said that after making a treaty with the local sultan and issuing coins in the name of Said Khan, Haidar withdrew from Kashmir.

Crossing the treacherous Zoji-La pass, Dughlat entered Kashmir in January 1533. His strategic maneuvering began with dispatching 400 elite troops under Tuman Bahadur Qabuchi, who executed a surprise assault on the Kashmiri army at Lar (Ganderbal). The shock attack caused the Kashmiri forces to flee toward Hanjik (Budgam), leaving the path to Srinagar open. Dughlat marched into Naushahr (Srinagar), the medieval seat of power, and seized control of the Rajdan, the secretariat palace built by Budshah. After securing Srinagar, Dughlat stayed for 24 days before marching toward Maraj (Maraz). The invasion caused widespread panic, forcing much of the population to seek refuge in the mountains.

Eventually, Dughlat opted for a political settlement. He arranged for the *khutba* (Friday sermon) to be read in the name of Said Khan, securing symbolic dominance. He further

strengthened his political position by marrying Prince Sikandar Sultan to the daughter of Kashmiri noble Muhammad Shah's brother. After securing gifts and political assurances, Dughlat exited Kashmir by May 1533.

Kashmir descended into political turmoil following Dughlat's withdrawal. A famine struck, and the nobility struggled to maintain order. In 1537, when Muhammad Shah died, his second son, Shamsuddin, succeeded him, sparking a civil war. Kaji Chak's power struggle with other nobles forced him to flee to Punjab before returning to reclaim Kashmir in 1538.

Dughlat's brief but intense campaign left Kashmir in political and economic disarray. However, Dughlat himself avoided returning home to Kashgar due to political tensions following the death of Said Khan. His loyalty to Iskander made him a target under the new ruler, Rashid. Dughlat instead focused on campaigns in Tibet and later worked for Kamran and Humayun in Lahore.

### **The Second Kashmir Invasion (1540)**

In 1540, Abdal Magre and Regi Chak sought Dughlat's help to overthrow Kaji Chak. After initial hesitation, Dughlat raised an army and marched toward Kashmir. He avoided direct confrontation, entering through the Poonch Pass on November 22, 1540. Kaji Chak, anticipating an attack through the Kapartal Pass, was outmaneuvered and fled Kashmir without a fight. Dughlat installed Nazuk Shah as a puppet ruler and divided Kashmir into three parts — ruling one part himself and assigning the others to Abdal and Regi. After Abdal's death,

Dughlat fostered alliances with Kashmiri nobles and revived arts and crafts in the region.

Dughlat's rule (1540–1551) marked a period of administrative and cultural reforms. He promoted education by establishing schools in villages, built mosques with heated bathhouses, and introduced Central Asian architecture and cuisine. Dughlat's passion for arts saw the introduction of new music, painting styles, and handicrafts. Around 3000 artisans were brought from East Turkestan to enhance local craftsmanship.

However, Dughlat's strict attitude strained his relationship with nobles, particularly Regi Chak. In 1543, Dughlat attempted to seize Regi's holdings, but Regi fled to Rajouri. A subsequent defeat of Kaji Chak and Regi at Gulmarg in 1544 strengthened Dughlat's control. In 1546, Dughlat defeated Regi's renewed invasion and displayed his severed head in Srinagar.

Despite attempts to align with Shia nobles by honoring the mausoleum of Mir Shamsuddin Iraqi, Dughlat later turned against the Shia community. He banned Shia practices and destroyed the tomb of Iraqi. Religious persecution intensified with the execution of Shaikhi Daniyal, Iraqi's son, on false charges of blasphemy. This deepened resentment among Kashmir's Shia population.

By 1551, opposition against Dughlat intensified. His mixed army of Kashmiris and Mughals suffered a crushing defeat at Manjkot, followed by a massacre at Barbal fort near Tosamaidan. Ignoring counsel, Dughlat led a desperate attack on Raina's fortress with only 30 men. While climbing the fort,

he was fatally struck by an arrow — possibly from his own soldier, Shah Nazar. Dughlat's death in October 1551 ended his tumultuous rule. His body was interred with honors in the royal graveyard (Mazar-e-Salateen) near Budshah's tomb.

Dughlat left a lasting mark on Kashmiri history. His architectural and cultural innovations shaped Kashmir's artistic identity. Central Asian historians celebrate him as a hero, and his legacy is honored in Kazakhstan, where Taraz State University bears his name. Dughlat's reign established Kashmir as a strategic link between Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent, reinforcing historical and cultural ties.

Despite his historical significance, Dughlat's grave in the Mazar-e-Salatin (Graveyard of Sultans) in Srinagar fell into neglect, a casualty of political shifts and anti-Mughal sentiment. It took nearly half a millennium and the determination of the Kazakh government to restore his legacy. In 1998, Kazakhstan celebrated Dughlat's 500th birth anniversary by renaming Taraz State University in his honor—now officially M Kh Dulaty Taraz Regional University. Streets were named after him, and a statue was erected in Taraz city. The Kazakh Embassy in Delhi, led by Ambassador Bulat Sarsenbayev, began the process of restoring his grave in 2015. The repairs took over two years, involving the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and Kazakh historians.

During the restoration, two inscriptions were recovered. The first, a broken white marble stone, bore the *Kalima Shahadah* and a Persian chronogram marking Dughlat's death. The missing fragment was found and restored after the official reopening. The second, a grey limestone slab inscribed in Persian, had been added in 1823 under the orders of British traveler William Moorcroft. On January 25, 2018, Ambassador Sarsenbayev and a delegation of Kazakh intellectuals, including the Rector of Taraz State University, offered formal prayers at the restored grave. The ceremony coincided with a seminar titled *Muhammed Haidar Duglati: The Golden Bridge Between India and Kazakhstan* at the University of Kashmir.

## **Chapter Six: Shah Fareed ud Din Baghdadi and the Timurid Mughals**

Hazrat Shah Fareed ud Din Baghdadi was a revered Sufi saint from the Qadiriyyah Gilani family of Baghdad. He migrated to Kishtwar through Delhi during the reign of the Timurid Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan. Hazrat Shah Fareed ud Din was accompanied by four devoted companions: Darvesh Muhammad, Wali e Sindh Shah Abdaal, Syed Baha ud Din of Agra, and Yaar Muhammad Panipati. His journey and mission fulfilled a prophecy made by Shah e Hamdan, Mir Syed Ali Hamadani, a saint of the Qubravi Sufi order who had earlier propagated Islam in Kashmir.

During his travels in Kashmir, Hazrat Mir Syed Ali Hamadani reached the borders of the Kishtwar region. The followers of Shah e Hamdan requested him to establish a Khanqah (Sufi monastery) in Kishtwar to propagate Islam. In response, Hazrat Mir Syed Ali Hamadani revealed that the region had already been divinely assigned to a descendant of Shaykh Syed Abdul Qadir Gilani. He further declared that this descendant would be named Shah Fareed ud Din and would spread Islam's teachings in the challenging terrain of Kishtwar. The prophecy was made in 781 AH and would come to fruition nearly two centuries later when Hazrat Shah Fareed Ud Din, under the spiritual directive of his grandfather, Ghous ul Azam Shaykh Syed Abdul Qadir Geelani, embarked on a transformative journey to Kishtwar.



Similarly, it is recorded that Hazrat Sheikh ul Alam Noorani, during his visit to Bandarkot for the spiritual training of Hazrat Sakhi Shah Zainuddin, also refrained from entering the city of Kishtwar for the same spiritual reason.

The arrival of Hazrat Shah Fareed Ud Din in Kishtwar marked a pivotal moment in the spiritual and religious history of the region, laying the foundation for Islamic faith and Sufi practice through his teachings, spiritual guidance, and exemplary conduct. His Khanqah remains a center of spiritual learning and Sufi traditions, continuing to inspire reverence and devotion.

Before his journey to Kishtwar, Hazrat Syed Fareed Ud Din (RA) experienced a significant dream that foreshadowed his divine mission. In the dream, he saw a gathering of saints in a grand hall, with a veil drawn over a niche. He wondered about the identity of the noble figure behind the curtain. It was then revealed to him that the figure was none other than the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). A crown was presented in the gathering, and the Prophet declared that it would be bestowed upon the most righteous among them. A radiant figure emerged, and upon focusing on him, Hazrat Syed Abdul Qadir Geelani, the Chief of the Saints, became visible. The Shaykh lifted the curtain, unveiling the blessed face of the Holy Prophet. The crown was offered to all the saints, but it did not fit anyone's head. Then, Shaykh Syed Abdul Qadir Geelani pointed towards Shah Sahib, upon whose head the crown fit

perfectly. Prophet Muhammad personally adorned the crown with a pearl and placed it on Shah Sahib's head, bestowing ten additional pearls upon him as a symbol of divine favor and spiritual authority. Upon awakening from this dream, Hazrat Syed Fareed Ud Din expressed profound gratitude for the divine blessing and guidance he had received.

Following this vision, Hazrat Syed Fareed Ud Din experienced another divine revelation while meditating at the shrine of Hazrat Ghous-ul-Azam (RA). In this vision, he beheld a grand throne with a veil hanging over it. Hazrat Ghous-ul-Azam was seated on the throne, surrounded by a circle of people. Hazrat Ghous-ul-Azam conveyed to Shah Sahib that he had been appointed by Allah to the sacred mission of guiding the people of Kishtwar towards Islam. He informed him that no one had previously been instructed to venture into Kishtwar, which lay on the periphery of Kashmir. Entrusted with this spiritual mandate, Hazrat Shah Fareed Ud Din immediately departed from Baghdad Sharif to fulfill his divine calling in Kishtwar.

Upon his arrival in Delhi, Shah Sahib was warmly received by a Timurid Mughal prince, who had been spiritually guided through a dream from the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) to prepare for his arrival. In gratitude for the divine guidance, the prince distributed 4000 rupees as *Sadqah* (charity) among the poor. After meeting with the prince, Shah Sahib was introduced to the Mughal Emperor Shah

Jahan. The Emperor, after learning about Shah Sahib's intention to travel to Kishtwar, informed him of the region's strategic significance and the long-standing difficulty the Mughals had faced in subjugating it due to its treacherous terrain and formidable defences. The Emperor implored Shah Sahib to remain in Delhi out of reverence for his spiritual stature, but Shah Sahib firmly stated that he could not deviate from the sacred mission assigned to him by Ghous-ul-Azam. Even the Timurid prince who hosted him attempted to persuade him, but Shah Sahib remained resolute in his commitment to fulfilling the divine command.

Before Shah Sahib departed, the Timurid prince offered his daughter, Bibi Asmat Maab, in marriage to him as a mark of spiritual devotion and familial bond. From this union was born Hazrat Shah Asrar Ud Din Baghdadi, known as Ghous-ul-Azam Sani, Taj-ul-Arifeen. This connection established a lasting link between the spiritual lineage of Shah Sahib and the Timurid Mughal dynasty. It was this familial relationship that later facilitated Shah Sahib's visits to the Feudal Lordship of Udhyampur, ruled by the Timurid Mughals. Thus, Hazrat Shah Fareed Ud Din's journey to Kishtwar not only fulfilled a prophetic command but also established a lasting spiritual and dynastic legacy in the region.

Thus, the Timurid Mughal family was the maternal home of Hazrat Asrar ud Din, and it was due to this family relationship

with the Timurid Mughals that Hazrat Shah sahab often visited the Feudal Lordship of Udhyampur, which was ruled by the Timurid Mughal family.

After arriving in Doda, Hazrat Shah Fareed Ud Din experienced a spiritual sign that led to his marriage with Beegh Sahiba, a Hindu Rajput lady from the esteemed Thakur family. Historical accounts recount that the Rajputs, initially resistant to this union, concealed Beegh Sahiba in a *loopan*—a large earthen clay pot traditionally used to store and preserve food. However, as Shah Sahib walked, the *loopan* in which Beegh Sahiba was hidden miraculously rolled alongside him. Witnessing this extraordinary event, the Thakur clan—who held deep reverence for spiritual figures—recognized the divine nature of the occurrence and willingly offered Beegh Sahiba’s hand in marriage to Shah Sahib. This sacred union was the last *Nikah* (marriage) performed by Shah Sahib in his lifetime. The Thakur clan, prominent Hindu landlords of the region, maintained a distinguished social status. To this day, the shrine of Beegh Sahiba remains accessible only to women and Rajputs of Nagri, preserving the sanctity of this spiritual legacy.

As Shah Sahib approached Kishtwar, the royal guards stationed at the river initially denied him and his four companions passage. Undeterred, Shah Sahib instructed his companions to close their eyes. Upon opening them, they found themselves miraculously standing on the opposite side of the river—a testament to Shah Sahib’s spiritual power.

Throughout his journey, Shah Sahib's numerous miracles inspired the people of the region to embrace Islam. The Timurid Mughals, despite their repeated military attempts to conquer the Kingdom of Kishtwar, had failed due to the region's difficult terrain and formidable defenses. However, Shah Sahib achieved the seemingly impossible—not through force, but through spiritual love and divine wisdom. His teachings and presence planted the seeds of Islam in Kishtwar, initiating a profound spiritual awakening that reshaped the religious and cultural landscape of the region.

Shah Sahib's life of purity, devotion, and selflessness reflected his deep connection to Allah Almighty and the teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). His spiritual authority and unwavering faith inspired unparalleled loyalty among his followers, who revered him with profound devotion. The transformative impact of his presence was most evident when Raja Kirat Singh of Kishtwar embraced Islam under his influence. Raja Kirat Singh adopted the name Raja Tegh Muhammad Singh and was given the honorary title of Bakht Yar Khan—a significant moment that underscored Shah Sahib's spiritual influence and the deep-rooted changes he brought to the region's religious identity.

Hazrat Shah Fareed Ud Din was blessed with three sons: Hazrat Syed Shah Asrar Ud Din, Hazrat Syed Shah Akhyar Ud Din, and Hazrat Syed Shah Anwaar Ud Din, each of whom carried

forward the spiritual legacy of their father. The *Urs*(anniversary) of Hazrat Shah Fareed Ud Din Baghdadi is commemorated annually on the 7th of Haad (20th and 21st June) with deep reverence and religious enthusiasm. Likewise, the *Urs* of Hazrat Shah Asrar Ud Din Baghdadi is observed on the 25th of Katak (9th and 10th November), drawing devotees from across the region to honour the enduring spiritual legacy of this revered saintly family.

### **Siddiqui Family of Astaan Payeen, Kishtwar**

The Siddiqui family of Agra was a prominent religious family with a lineage tracing back to the First Caliph of Islam, Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq, who was a close friend, companion, and father-in-law of the final Prophet, Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon him). Their ancestor, Hafiz Abul Qasim Siddiqui Akbarabadi, was the son of Hafiz Ghiyas ud Din Siddiqui, a descendant of Shaikh Shehab ud Din Siddiqui, a Shaykh in the Suhrawardiyah Sufi Order.

Having served in the Mughal Court in Delhi as clergy, the family enjoyed special favors from the ruling elite for their loyal services to the crown. Upon arriving in Kishtwar, they continued to serve as Hakims, religious clerics, and preachers. Many prominent members of the family specialized in Unani treatments, offering medical services to the locals and people from distant regions. Known as Khandan e Qasimiya after their

ancestor Hafiz Qasim Siddiqui, the family produced notable religious scholars and authors. They were highly educated and proficient in Arabic, Persian, and local languages, as well as well-trained in spiritual sciences. Eminent members of Khandan e Qasimiyah produced significant works on the life of Hazrat Shah Sahib and his family, such as Rozatul Arofeen, Gulshan e Asrar, and Diwans of Poetry like Kulliyat e Muhi and Kulliyat e Ziyai. Their contributions have left a lasting impact on the spiritual and literary landscape of the region.

Hafiz Abul Qasim migrated to Kishtwar during the Mughal Period when the region was introduced to Islam by Shah Sahab. He was appointed as a Qazi and given the responsibility of preaching religious sermons to the common public, many of whom were new to Islam. He was also blessed to marry Zeb ud Din Begum, the foster sister of Shah Asrar ud Din and daughter of Hazrat Baha ud Din Samani, one of the four companions and successors of Shah Sahib. Initially appointed as the teacher of Shah Asrar Sahib by Shah Fareed ud Din Baghdadi, Hafiz Abul Qasim was amazed when he found that the four-year-old Shah Asrar already possessed deep knowledge of religious sciences and displayed esoteric knowledge beyond his age. This discovery led Hafiz Abul Qasim to become an ardent devotee and student of Shah Asrar. The family had close ties with Shah Sahib and his family, and their connection extended to other spiritual masters as well. For instance, Hazrat Shah Akhiyar ud Din Baghdadi lived around Pathankot, Punjab, and preached in

northern parts of India, including Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, and Lahore. He did not marry and left all of his property to those close to him, with the Qasimiyah family being one of the major beneficiaries of Shah Akhyar Sahib's inheritance.

Muhi ud Din Muhi writes in *Gulshan e Asrar* that when Hafiz Anayatullah, from the same family, climbed an apricot tree outside the house of Hazrat Shah Fareed-ud-Din Bagdadi to collect some apricots, his shirt got stuck to the branch and was torn. Hazrat Shah Asrar ud Din Bagdadi RA witnessed this incident and commanded the tree to turn into gold, which it did. He then commanded the tree to turn back to its original state, which it did by the will of God. The apricots in the pocket of Hafiz Anayatullah remained in the same golden state. This miraculous incident left a lasting impact on those who witnessed it. The Siddiqui family has a rich history and deep connection with the shrine of Hazrat Shah Asrar ud Din Bagdadi RA. One branch of the family moved from Astan Bala to Bun Astan and dedicated their lives to the service of the shrine. The rest of the family remained at Astan Bala.

Through matrimonial alliances, some Geelani families from Poolia, Anantnag, and Kashmir settled at Astan Bala. The Siddiquis also married their daughters into the Gilani Syed Family of Udhyampur, following the custom of marrying within their social status. Some servants who previously worked for Shah Sahib's family were later engaged by the ancestors of the



Qasimiyah family to serve and earn a livelihood on their lands around the shrine. Talib Shah Faqueer was one such servant, buried in the land given to him by the Siddiqui family, who are the primary caretakers of the Asraria Shrine. Though he had no children, he adopted the destitute family of Sajjan Shah Faqueer, who converted to Islam, and their descendants still live there.

The family received extensive land and riches from Mughal King Aurangzeb, Raja Tegh Bahadur, and properties belonging to Shah Akhiyar ud-Din Bagdadi sahib. Hafiz Anaytullah was given the Spiritual Successorship (Khilafat) by Shah Akhar ud Din and was appointed the caretaker of the Shrine of Shah Asrar ud Din Sahib. The family continues to serve as the Mujawirs at the Shrine, and the current Sajaddah-Nasheen Peer Eijaz Siddiqui, a retired engineer, belongs to the same family. The Siddiqui family has produced notable scholars, Sufis, poets, and Hakeems. Renowned personalities include Hafiz Abul Qasim Siddiqui, Hafiz Anaytullah Siddiqui, Peer Zia ud din Ziyai Siddiqui, Peer Muhi ud din Muhi Siddiqui, Hazrat Baha ud din Siddiqui, Hakim Wazir ud din Siddiqui, and Peer Riyaz Siddiqui. Their contributions have left a lasting impact on the spiritual and intellectual heritage of the region.

## **Chapter Seven: Hazrat Shah Asrar ud Din Baghdadi, R.A.**

Hazrat Syed Asraruddin Qadri Baghdadi (RA) was born in 1079 AH (1668 CE) in Kishtwar, three years after the visit of Hazrat Shah Fariduddin Baghdadi (RA) to the valley. His birth was divinely foretold, and he emerged as a beacon of spiritual light and miraculous power from the earliest moments of his life. Shah Asrar (RA) was the spiritual heir of Hazrat Ghous-ul-Azam Shaykh Syed Abdul Qadir Jilani (RA) and embodied both the spiritual nobility of the Qadiriyya order and the royal lineage of the Timurid-Mughal dynasty through his mother.

Hazrat Shah Fariduddin (RA), the father of Shah Asrar (RA), was informed of his son's birth through divine visions. It is recorded that Hazrat Shah Fariduddin (RA) saw the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in a dream, who gave him the glad tidings of the birth of a son who would be blessed in both this world and the hereafter. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) instructed that the child be named Asraruddin.

In another vision, Hazrat Ghous-ul-Azam Shaykh Syed Abdul Qadir Jilani (RA) confirmed the birth and declared, *"This son will be a source of spiritual guidance and blessings for the Ummah. Name him Asraruddin, for he will be a treasure of divine secrets."*

Shah Asrar (RA) was born on a Friday night after spending only six months in his mother's womb — an early birth that did not hinder his physical or spiritual perfection. His birth was accompanied by miraculous signs. His mother experienced intense discomfort if she consumed anything doubtful during pregnancy. The sound of "Ya Hayyu, Ya Qayyum" was heard from her womb before his birth. When he was born, a heavenly fragrance of roses filled the room, and a radiant light illuminated the surroundings.

Hazrat Syed Bahauddin (RA) reported that the year of Shah Asrar's birth was marked by miraculous events. Every pregnant woman in the region gave birth to sons, a phenomenon reminiscent of the birth of Ghous-ul-Azam (RA) in Baghdad. Shah Asrar's body exuded a permanent fragrance of roses, and his face shone with divine light. Even as an infant, his presence in the house would illuminate the *Hujra Sharif* (blessed chamber) at night.

Shah Asrar (RA) displayed extraordinary spiritual insight and miraculous powers from an early age. His mother recalled that she would hear the sound of Quranic recitation coming from his chest when he was only a few months old.

By the age of three, Shah Asrar (RA) had memorized the entire Quran and began delivering insightful commentary on it, astonishing scholars and religious leaders. When asked where

he had learned such profound knowledge, he replied, *"My Lord has taught me. This is the bounty of Allah. He bestows it on whom He wills."*

At the age of five, Shah Asrar (RA) began curing the sick through his prayers. His first known miracle occurred when a blind man approached his father for help. Shah Asrar (RA) touched the man's eyes and prayed, saying, *"Ya Hayyu, Ya Qayyum, Ya Rahman, Ya Raheem."* The man's sight was instantly restored.

At the age of seven, he revived a child who had drowned in the river. He placed his blessed hand on the child's chest, recited Surah Al-Fatiha, and the child awoke as if from sleep.

Shah Asrar (RA) would sit in deep spiritual contemplation for hours. Once, his father entered his room and saw Shah Asrar suspended in mid-air while in prayer — a state of spiritual absorption (*Maqam-e-Fana*).

Shah Asrar (RA) inherited a dual lineage of spiritual and worldly nobility:

1. Paternal Lineage – He descended from Hazrat Ghous-ul-Azam Shaykh Syed Abdul Qadir Jilani (RA), carrying the spiritual legacy of the Qadiriyya order.
2. Maternal Lineage – His mother, Princess of Delhi, was a direct descendant of the Timurid-Mughal dynasty of

New Delhi, linking him to the royal bloodline of the Mughal Empire.

Shah Asrar (RA) was the beloved son and spiritual heir of Hazrat Shah Fariduddin (RA), who declared him as his successor while Shah Asrar was still a child.

The miracles (*Karamat*) of Shah Asrar (RA) have been documented in detail by Hazrat Syed Bahauddin (RA) and Hazrat Syed Anwaruddin (RA) in the sacred texts "*Gulshan-e-Asrar*" and "*Rauzatul Aarifeen*." Some of his most famous miracles include Healing the Sick and Restoring Sight. Shah Asrar (RA) would simply touch the blind or the paralyzed, and they would be instantly cured. On one occasion, a leper approached him for healing. Shah Asrar (RA) rubbed his blessed hand over the man's body and recited "*Ya Shafi, Ya Kafi*." The man's skin was instantly healed. During a funeral, a grieving mother placed her deceased son at Shah Asrar's feet. He knelt, prayed over the boy, and whispered into his ear. The boy opened his eyes and sat up, fully revived. One summer, the crops in Kishtwar were dying from a drought. Shah Asrar (RA) raised his hands toward the sky and prayed. Within moments, dark clouds gathered, and it began to rain. The rain continued for three days, reviving the land. Once, a powerful sorcerer tried to harm Shah Asrar (RA) using black magic. Shah Asrar (RA) smiled, recited Surah Al-Baqarah, and the sorcerer fell unconscious. Upon awakening, the sorcerer repented and

embraced Islam. Shah Asrar (RA) attained the rank of Ghaus al-Azam Sani (the Second Ghaus) during his lifetime. His spiritual presence was so powerful that even kings and rulers sought his guidance. After the passing of his father, Shah Asrar (RA) formally assumed the position of Qutb (spiritual pole) of the region. Hazrat Syed Akhayaruddin (RA), his younger brother, served as his deputy and continued his mission after his passing.

Shah Asrar (RA) departed from this world on 25 Sha'ban 1097 Hijri (1686 CE) at the young age of 18. He passed away in the arms of his father, Hazrat Shah Fariduddin (RA). His body was enshrouded in a heavenly fragrance, and a luminous light was seen over his blessed grave for three nights. The resting place of Shah Asrar (RA) in Kishtwar remains a site of pilgrimage and spiritual blessings. Countless seekers of truth and healing continue to experience his spiritual presence. His lineage and teachings have been preserved and carried forward by his descendants and spiritual heirs. Shah Asrar's (RA) life remains a testament to the enduring power of faith, spiritual leadership, and divine connection. He is remembered as a saint whose mere presence elevated hearts and whose prayers transformed lives.

The extraordinary feats attributed to Asrar Sahab have been meticulously documented in the books "Gulshan e Asrar" and "Rauzatul Aarifeen." Certain excerpts from these accounts are being shared to highlight the spiritual heritage and honour the

local cultural narratives and tales that have sentimental value for the local population and reflect the deep-rooted spiritual inclination that is part of their culture, tradition and vernacular.

### **Miracles attributed to Shah Asrar ud Din Wali**

The miracles attributed to Shah Asrar ud Din Sahib, though often shrouded in the mystique of legend and folklore, hold an enduring place in the cultural and spiritual fabric of the region. These tales, drawn from the venerable Persian works *Rozat ul Arifeen*, *Gulshan e Asrar*, *Kulliyat e Ziyai*, and *Kuliyat e Muhi*, are not merely accounts of supernatural feats but also serve as rich narratives that illuminate the belief systems and collective psyche of the people of that era.

Documenting these accounts is of profound importance—not to dissect their veracity but to preserve their essence as cultural artifacts that bridge the present to a time when faith intertwined seamlessly with daily life, and the extraordinary was an accepted part of existence. These stories offer invaluable insight into the spiritual worldview of a bygone age, reflecting the aspirations, fears, and hopes that shaped the identity of those who lived under their influence.

By chronicling these mythical accounts, we do not merely record isolated events but safeguard a legacy that speaks to the profound impact of Sufism on the traditions and cultural ethos of the region. In doing so, we ensure that future generations

inherit not just the tales of miracles but also the deeper understanding of a way of life that celebrated the union of the divine and the human in the most sublime of ways.

### **The Knowledge of Hazrat Syedna Asrar Pak (R.A.)**

At the tender age of just four years, Hazrat Syedna Asrar Pak (R.A.) displayed extraordinary knowledge and wisdom. At the time of his Bismillah Khwani ceremony, when Hazrat Hafiz Muhammad Qasim was appointed to initiate him into learning, the teacher intended to begin with the alphabet, hoping to gradually guide him through the path of knowledge. However, Syed Asraruddin (R.A.) firmly refused to proceed in the conventional manner.

When the teacher persisted in his efforts to teach him, a divine manifestation of knowledge unfolded. Pearls of wisdom and insight began to flow from the blessed tongue of Syed Asraruddin (R.A.). He addressed his teacher, saying, *"Stand and listen with reverence, for the Lord of Majesty (Dhul-Jalal) has already enriched my heart with the treasures of knowledge. This is not acquired learning; it is a divine gift. Allah has made my chest a repository of all knowledge and hidden secrets."*

Astonished by this revelation, the teacher humbly listened as Syed Asraruddin (R.A.) flawlessly recited the entire Holy Qur'an with perfect tajweed and profound understanding of its tafsir. He further expounded on intricate scientific and



theological truths with a clarity and depth that left the teacher in awe. In that moment, the teacher recognized the spiritual stature of the young Syed and declared, *"I am not the teacher of Syed Asraruddin; I am his humble servant. Allah Ta'ala has already blessed him with the entirety of knowledge — his heart is the treasury of divine wisdom, and his being is the custodian of sacred truths."*

The teacher then presented Syed Asraruddin (R.A.) before Hazrat Shah Fariduddin, narrating the entire incident. Shah Fariduddin acknowledged the miraculous nature of this gift, affirming that Syed Asraruddin's knowledge was not of this world, but a direct blessing from the Divine.

### **Reviving the Same Chakor (Partridge) Seven Times**

One day, Hazrat Shah Asraruddin (R.A.) was sitting happily with his honorable father, Hazrat Syed Farid ud Din (R.A.). His students and *murideen* (devoted followers) were present as well. The atmosphere was as serene and sacred as the reunion of Hazrat Yusuf (Prophet Joseph, peace be upon him) and Hazrat Yaqoob (Prophet Jacob, peace be upon him).

During this gathering, a hunter arrived, carrying a freshly hunted *Chakor* (partridge). After offering salutations in the *bargah* (sacred court) of Hazrat Shah Asraruddin (R.A.), the hunter humbly requested, "Please accept this offering of mine so that my intention may be fulfilled." While this

conversation was still underway, the sound of a *naqara* (ceremonial drum) echoed from outside. Hazrat Shah Asraruddin (R.A.) asked, "Why is the *naqara* being played?" The people replied, "A non-Muslim person has died, and his body is being taken to the *Shamsan Ghat* (cremation ground)." Hazrat Shah Asraruddin (R.A.) then asked, "What does it mean to die?" The people replied, "It is divine destiny. Death is the decree of Allah." At that moment, the hunter placed the lifeless Chakor before Hazrat Shah Asraruddin (R.A.) and said, "Just as this bird is now soulless and cannot fly, so too is death the natural fate of all living beings."

Hazrat Shah Asraruddin (R.A.) then lifted the lifeless Chakor with his blessed hands (*Dast-e-Sharif*) and said, "Come back to life by the will of Allah." Immediately, the lifeless Chakor stirred, opened its eyes, and began to stretch its wings and legs. It then started walking before the gathering. The Chakor circled the assembly, and in a clear voice, it said: "*As-salamu alaikum ya Wali Allah!*" "*Peace be upon you, O Friend of Allah!*" The Chakor then addressed Hazrat Shah Asraruddin (R.A.) with reverence: "*You are Al-Nabi Olad Ali (descendant of the Prophet from the lineage of Hazrat Ali), you are Shah Asrar ud Din Wali (the saintly master of divine secrets).*"

Hazrat Shah Asraruddin (R.A.) then slaughtered the Chakor, cooked it in oil, and after it was fully prepared, he commanded it to rise again. The Chakor came back to life, spread its wings,

and flew away into the forest. The next day, the same Chakor returned and presented itself before Hazrat Shah Asraruddin (R.A.). He once again slaughtered it, cooked it, and revived it. This extraordinary event was repeated seven times. Each time, Hazrat Shah Asraruddin (R.A.) would slaughter the Chakor, cook it, and bring it back to life by the will of Allah. The Chakor would rise each time, greet Hazrat Shah Asraruddin (R.A.) with salutations, and fly away.

The people present were left speechless, marveling at this divine display of spiritual authority. They praised Allah, saying: "*SubhanAllah!*" "*Glory be to Allah!*" Hazrat Shah Asraruddin (R.A.) then said, "*This is the bounty of Allah; He bestows it upon whomsoever He wills.*" (*Qur'an 2:105*) This miracle left no doubt in the hearts of the people about the exalted rank of Hazrat Shah Asraruddin (R.A.) and the divine favor bestowed upon him.

### **A Boy Revived from Death and Blessed with the Light of Faith**

With the arrival of spring, the trees turned lush green, and people's hearts filled with joy and happiness. The dew bathed the *Gul* (rose) and *Gulshan* (garden of roses), making them sparkle under the sunlight, which lent them a luster like pearls. Hazrat Shah Asrar (R.A.) went for a walk toward the Chogan (polo field) of Kishtwar—a place he often graced with his presence.

As soon as Hazrat Asraruddin (R.A.) entered the Chogan, the *Poshha Nool* (a type of local flowering plant) would sway rhythmically, as if in a state of ecstasy. The *Bulbuls* (songbirds) would engross themselves in reciting *Durood* (blessings upon the Prophet Muhammad, PBUH), while the sparrows and other birds would chirp melodiously, intoxicated by divine joy. The *Bamboor* (a type of bird) and *Kastor* (another type of bird) would mention the divine in their own distinct dialects. The floor of the field was carpeted with vibrant greenery, and the air was filled with the essence of spring. The field's golden hue reflected the full bloom of the season.

When Hazrat Syed Asraruddin (R.A.) stepped onto the field with his blessed feet, it seemed as though the *Hur* (heavenly maidens) and *Ghulman* (heavenly servants) were descending from paradise. His presence would cleanse and sanctify the field, which seemed to swell with pride as though it had become a sacred blessing. It was as if *Rizwan* (the gatekeeper of paradise) himself had granted entry to heaven, transforming the Chogan into a paradise on earth. His blessed body was like a delicate flower, and the gentle morning breeze (*Naseem Sahar*) seemed to embrace him, while the fragrant evening breeze (*Badsaba*) kissed his feet in reverence.

He would walk across the Chogan with a calm and composed demeanor, his heart immersed in divine remembrance. It seemed as though the earth had become a ball beneath his feet, and the entire world was left in awe of his beauty and grace.

When Hazrat Asraruddin (R.A.) struck the polo ball, it moved with such mastery that the field itself became a silent spectator, as if witnessing the beauty of *Yusuf Sani* (a reference to the unparalleled beauty of Prophet Yusuf).

One day, a young Hindu boy, full of youthful energy, came running to play polo. His ball accidentally rolled toward Hazrat Asraruddin's feet. By the divine command of Allah, the boy was overcome by the overwhelming glory of Hazrat's presence. He collapsed instantly, writhing in pain. The boy's mortal frame could not withstand the spiritual radiance of Hazrat's gaze, and he died on the spot—as though touched by divine majesty.

The mountains trembled at this event, and the bright day turned into a dark night. The people were horrified, thinking that perhaps the Day of Judgment had arrived. The boy's family and the townspeople rushed to Hazrat's court, pleading for mercy. They explained that the boy had acted out of ignorance, without malice, and had paid for his impudence with his life. With utmost humility, they begged Hazrat Shah Asrar (R.A.) to forgive him and intercede for his soul.

Manifesting the divine attribute of *Afw* (forgiveness), Hazrat Shah Asrar (R.A.) accepted their plea. Instantly, the darkness lifted, and the tremors ceased. The boy's lifeless body was carried away in mourning. That night was spent in tears and grief. The next morning, the boy was bathed and prepared for cremation according to Hindu rites.

When Hazrat Asraruddin (R.A.) heard about the planned cremation, he said, "How can a body that I have touched be burned in fire?" The boy's family and the townspeople, now filled with hope, brought the body to Hazrat's court and placed it humbly before him. Hazrat Asraruddin (R.A.) commanded them to set the body down.

He then raised his blessed staff and lightly touched the boy's body. "Qum bi iznillah" (Rise by the command of Allah), he said. At that moment, the boy awakened as if from a deep sleep. He sat up, greeted Hazrat Asraruddin (R.A.) with respect, and instantly recited the *Shahada* (declaration of faith):

*"Ashhadu an la ilaha illa Allah, wa ashhadu anna Muhammadur Rasul Allah."*

*(I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.)*

The boy had not only been revived but had also embraced Islam. His family and the townspeople, awestruck by this divine miracle, also accepted Islam and were thus freed from eternal damnation. The Chogan, now transformed into a paradise-like haven, resounded with the praises of Allah as the birds and the winds joined in a celestial chorus. Even the tall trees lining the field seemed to bow in reverence to Hazrat Syed Asraruddin

(R.A.), whose presence had turned the earthly polo field into a glimpse of paradise.

### **An Unbeliever's Son Was Cured of Blindness and an Incurable Disease**

A Hindu man had a child who was born both blind and crippled. Filled with sorrow, the man brought his son to the presence of Hazrat Shah Fariduddin (R.A.). He humbly said, *"This is my only son, and I have no other. He is both crippled and blind. I beg you to pray for him. If my child is healed through your prayers, I promise that I will embrace Islam."* Hazrat Shah Fariduddin (R.A.) replied, *"Go and present your case in the sacred court (bargah) of Hazrat Syed Asrar ud Din (R.A.). Your wish will be fulfilled there."* The man, filled with hope, came to the court of Hazrat Syed Asrar ud Din (R.A.) and held his blessed hand (*Dast-e-Sharif*). Falling at his feet, he pleaded, *"If my child is cured through your supplication, I will accept Islam."*

Hearing this heartfelt plea, the ocean of mysticism (*tasawwuf*) within Hazrat Syed Asrar ud Din (R.A.) stirred. He entered into a deep state of silent meditation (*muraqaba*), contemplating the divine mysteries for a long time. Suddenly, his blessed countenance began to change. A radiant light (*nur*) of beauty and perfection emerged from his face, and divine manifestations (*tajalliyat*) began to appear. The atmosphere

became charged with spiritual energy, and the hearts of the assembly members were filled with awe and reverence.

The disabled child was brought forward. Hazrat Syed Asrar ud Din (R.A.) placed his blessed hand on the child's head and, with divine authority, said, *"Look, by the command of Allah, and be healed!"* By the command of Allah, the child's blind eyes opened, and his vision was instantly restored. His crippled limbs became strong and straight, and he stood up, walking perfectly for the first time in his life. His once lifeless body was now filled with strength and vitality. The boy's face shone with light as he gazed around in astonishment.

Seeing this divine miracle, the father was overwhelmed with gratitude. Overcome with awe at the manifestation of Allah's power through Hazrat Syed Asrar ud Din (R.A.), he immediately renounced his disbelief and embraced Islam with sincerity. His heart, once veiled by ignorance, was now illuminated by the light of faith. Witnessing this extraordinary event, the people present were amazed and said among themselves, *"What an exalted station our guide and spiritual leader Syed Asrar Pak holds!"* Hazrat Syed Asrar ud Din (R.A.) addressed those gathered, saying, *"My friends, just as this man and his family were purified from unbelief (kufr) and cleansed from associating partners with Allah (shirk), you too should guard your hearts against hidden shirk. The heart is the seat of faith—keep it free from impurities and false attachments."* Many hearts, once darkened by disbelief and ignorance, were



illuminated by the blessed hand of Hazrat Syed Asrar ud Din (R.A.). People who had been spiritually lost now awakened from their slumber and embraced the truth with devotion and sincerity. Their hearts became filled with the light of faith.

Hazrat Syed Asrar ud Din (R.A.) revealed such miracles that restoring sight to the blind and raising the dead became commonplace in his presence. He performed miracles reminiscent of the miracles of Hazrat Isa (Prophet Jesus, peace be upon him), who healed the sick and gave life to the dead by the will of Allah.

Hazrat Syed Asrar ud Din (R.A.) said, *"Understand with your heart and soul that Allah manifests His power through His chosen servants. Just as Allah showed His power through the miracles of Jesus (peace be upon him), He reveals His perfection through us by His will and command. My Lord is the Mighty and the Majestic, and it is He who manifests perfection through us."* This miracle not only healed the child but also awakened the hearts of those who witnessed it, drawing them closer to the truth and the divine grace of Allah.

### **The Withered Tree Became Green and Fruitful**

It was a blessed day, marked by the divine grace of Allah, when the heavens and the earth were showered with divine blessings. It seemed as though a special mercy (*rehmat*) from Allah was descending from the *Arsh-e-Azam* (The Supreme Throne).

Shah Asrar, the son of Hasnain Karimayn, the bloom of garden of Fatima and the descendant of Hazrat Ali (R.A.), stood as the rightful heir and vicegerent (*khalifa*) of Hazrat Syedna Fariduddin and Hazrat Ghous-e-Azam (R.A.), who had established the highest stations of divine knowledge and understanding (*irfan*). Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.) was the true heir of the spiritual and intellectual legacy of Hazrat Syedna Mawla Ali (R.A.) and his beloved children. His presence was like standing before the Beloved of Allah.

Hazrat Shah Fariduddin (R.A.) was known for his deep connection with the perfections (*kamalat*) of knowledge and spirituality. His gatherings were attended by scholars of mysticism (*irfan*), followers of the path of Allah (*Ahlullah*), and seekers of divine wisdom. His discourses were treasures of monotheism (*tawheed*) and spiritual insight. He was a manifestation of the perfections of his ancestor Hazrat Ghous-e-Azam (R.A.) and reflected the light of the Prophet (PBUH). He was a great *Qutb* (spiritual pole) and held the elevated rank of *Malik Qaman* (Master of the Universe).

On one occasion, a gathering (*majlis*) was taking place where the scholars and seekers were engaged in a discussion about *Tawheed* (Oneness of Allah) and *Irfan* (spiritual knowledge). Each person spoke according to their capacity and understanding. Then, Hazrat Shah Asraruddin (R.A.) remarked, "*The kind of discourse you are engaging in stems from imitation (taqlid), not deep understanding.*" The members of the

assembly replied, *"We have hundreds of arguments and proofs to support our research on this subject. Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) responded, "If you truly seek to comprehend the reality of Tawheed and Irfan, you need stronger evidence — a clear and undeniable manifestation of divine power."*

In front of them stood a dry, lifeless tree. Its branches were withered, and it appeared close to collapsing. Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) pointed toward the tree and said, *"Breathe on this tree. If your understanding of Tawheed is true and your research is sound, the tree will become green and bear fruit."* The members of the assembly hesitated, acknowledging the difficulty of the task. Despite this, some stepped forward and began to blow upon the tree, but nothing happened. The tree remained barren, and those who tried returned in shame and disappointment.

Then Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) stepped forward, raised his blessed hand, and with divine authority said, *"Breathe, in the name of Allah!"* Instantly, life surged through the tree. Its dried branches turned green, leaves sprouted, and fresh buds and fruits began to grow. The tree bloomed with the fragrance of the gardens of Paradise, and its fruits were imbued with an extraordinary taste. From the leaves and branches of the tree, sounds of divine remembrance (*zikr*) could be heard, resonating with the praises of Allah.

The members of the assembly were astonished by this miraculous sight. They stood in awe, witnessing the divine

glory manifested through Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.). At that moment, Hazrat Syed Shah Fariduddin (R.A.) addressed Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) with deep affection and said, *"O my beloved son, you were only seven years old when you displayed the perfection of the full moon (Badr Kamil). Now the time has come for you to receive the robe of spiritual authority (khilafat) from me."* With humility, Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) submitted, *"Despite this great favor and grace, I feel unworthy of such a station."* Hazrat Fariduddin (R.A.) replied, *"This is not by my choice; it is the command of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). You have been appointed by Allah for this sacred mission."* Later that night, Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) saw a vision of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) who instructed him to accept the mantle of spiritual authority. The next morning, Hazrat Shah Fariduddin (R.A.) formally performed the investiture, placing the robe of Khilafat upon Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.).

From that day forward, Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) emerged as a sun of spiritual guidance and knowledge. His teachings illuminated the hearts of seekers, and his words carried the power to awaken souls. His discourses on *Tawheed* and *Irfan* would cause listeners to lose themselves in divine ecstasy — some would faint, while others would even pass away due to the overwhelming spiritual intensity. Shaykh-ul-Islam Hafiz Qasim once lost consciousness for an entire week after hearing a discourse from Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.), and on another occasion, he fainted and passed away. It was said that whoever

sat under the tree that Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) had revived would hear the sounds of divine remembrance (*zikr*) emanating from its leaves and branches. Those who ate from its fruits would be blessed with knowledge and spiritual insight.

When Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) passed away, the tree withered once again, signifying the passing of his physical presence. A noble coffin was crafted from the wood of that tree, and Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) was laid to rest with honor and reverence.

The blessed tree, which had once been a living testament to the power of divine grace, stood as a symbol of Hazrat Asrar Pak's (R.A.) spiritual legacy. Through him, Kishtwar became a center of divine knowledge and guidance — a second Baghdad — where seekers of truth would find spiritual nourishment and enlightenment.

### **The Walking of the Inanimate Wall and the Incident of the Lion-Riding Dervish**

One day, Hazrat Syed Asrar Pak (R.A.) went for a walk in Chogan — a place known for its soul-refreshing breeze and natural beauty. While walking happily in the polo field with his companions, he decided to explore the nearby garden. As he walked, he encountered an extraordinary sight: a Mastana (ecstatic mystic) riding a lion and using a snake as a whip. The dervish appeared to be in a state of spiritual intoxication (*jazb*). Hazrat Syed Asrar Pak (R.A.) approached

him, offered a greeting (*salaam*), and asked, *"O self-styled dervish, how did you get here, and where are you headed?"* The dervish replied, *"I heard that a great Sayyid resides in this city — Hazrat Shah Fariduddin (R.A.). I have long desired to meet him. He belongs to the noble lineage of the Prophet (PBUH) — Sayyid, Nakhi, Karim, and from the Ahl al-Bayt."* Hazrat Syed Asrar Pak (R.A.) responded with humility, *"I am not that perfect one. I seek spiritual nourishment from Hazrat Sheikh Fariduddin (R.A.)."* Then Hazrat Syed Asrar Pak (R.A.) observed the unusual sight of the lion-riding dervish and remarked, *"O self-styled dervish, riding a living creature is no great feat. If you truly possess spiritual power, then give life to that which is lifeless. Only Allah has the power to create life."*

Nearby, there was an old, rough wall, standing lifeless and crumbling. Hazrat Syed Asrar Pak (R.A.) pointed toward it and said, *"By the will of Allah, come to me!"* Immediately, by the command of Allah, the lifeless wall came to life. It began to move toward Hazrat Syed Asrar Pak (R.A.) and bowed before him. Hazrat Syed Asrar Pak (R.A.) then mounted the wall as if it were a horse, and the wall began to gallop swiftly — like a well-trained steed.

The dervish, riding a lion, watched in shock and amazement. The wall ran with such speed and grace that the lion rider grew tired and humiliated. The lion stumbled, and the dervish could no longer keep up. Where was the glory of the lion rider in comparison to the miraculous riding of a lifeless wall? The

dervish's pride was shattered. At the same time, the King of Kishtwar had left his palace with his hunting entourage. When the people saw Hazrat Syed Asrar Pak (R.A.) riding the wall like a chariot, they rushed to inform the king, "*Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.) is riding a wall! It is as if the sun has risen from the mountain, shining with divine glory.*" The king immediately dismounted his horse, approached Hazrat Syed Asrar Pak (R.A.) with respect, and bowed before him. He kissed his hands and feet as a gesture of reverence. Meanwhile, the lion threw the dervish off its back and his divine powers faded away — a sign of divine displeasure with his arrogance. When Hazrat Shah Fariduddin (R.A.) heard about the incident, he called for the lion and the dervish. He commanded the lion to submit and fed both the lion and the dervish, ensuring that the matter was settled according to divine will.

Hazrat Syed Fariduddin (R.A.) then said to the dervish, "*You will be our guest tonight. Tomorrow, you will be restored with everything that was taken from you.*" Hazrat Syed Asrar Pak (R.A.) comforted and reassured the dervish, showing him hospitality and care. The next day, all that the dervish had lost was returned to him. Realizing the greatness of Hazrat Syed Asrar Pak (R.A.), the dervish bowed his head in humility and said, "*Indeed, you are a beloved of Allah, in the rank of the divinely chosen ones.*" With newfound humility and gratitude, the dervish praised Hazrat Syed Asrar Pak (R.A.) and returned to his path, spiritually elevated and purified.

## He Brought the Goat Kebab to Life

A sincere and devoted follower (*mureed*) of Hazrat Shah Fariduddin (R.A.) was known for his deep loyalty and service. One day, he prepared a banquet as an offering to the sacred court (*bargah*) of Hazrat Shah Fariduddin (R.A.) and Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.). The follower had brought a variety of food items, including fresh bread and goat kebabs, which were carefully placed on the table before the two great saints. As the gathering began, Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.) looked at the kebab and immediately said, *"Take this meat away from here — it is not halal."* The sincere follower was surprised and respectfully said, *"Huzoor, what is the matter? I prepared this myself with great care and love. I ensured that it was halal."*

Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.) smiled and said, *"Everything is illuminated before me — the truth behind this meat is not hidden."* To prove the matter, Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) commanded the roasted kebab on the table, *"Speak! Reveal the truth of your condition."* To everyone's amazement, the kebab spoke clearly and said, *"I am the property of a poor man (a goat). An oppressor took me from my rightful owner and sold me to a shopkeeper, who then sold me to a butcher. This follower of yours unknowingly bought the meat from that butcher and prepared it into kebab. But I am not halal, as my original owner was wrongfully deprived of me."*



The entire gathering was left stunned, listening to the miraculous speech of the kebab. Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) then commanded, *"Return to the form Allah Ta'ala originally gave you."* By the divine will of Allah, the kebab transformed back into a living goat right before everyone's eyes. The goat stood up, fully alive, and began running toward its original master's house. The poor man, upon seeing his goat returned, was overwhelmed with joy. He called his family and said, *"This is the very goat that was taken from us. It has returned — surely, this is a divine blessing!"* The family hid the goat inside their home, fearing that the oppressor might try to reclaim it.

Witnessing this miracle, the devoted follower stood at a distance in awe and humility, realizing the immense spiritual power of Hazrat Syed Asrar Pak (R.A.). He lowered his head in reverence and began praising the saint with heartfelt sincerity. Hazrat Syed Asrar Pak (R.A.) raised his hands in prayer and said, *"May Allah bless you with the barakah (blessing) of Bismillah."* The follower was blessed with prosperity and abundance thereafter. Through the grace of Hazrat Syed Asrar Pak (R.A.), his poverty was lifted, and he became wealthy and respected in his community.

The miraculous spiritual stature of Hazrat Syed Asrar Pak (R.A.) was such that even animals, plants, and inanimate objects recognized his sanctity. Animals would cry before him and follow his commands with devotion. When he walked through fields, barren lands would suddenly blossom into

spring, and trees would begin to bear fruit. Trees would bow in reverence, performing a form of spiritual circumambulation (*tawaf*) around him. Flowers would open and release a sweet fragrance at his sight, and their petals would sing praises in soft, melodic voices. Even stones on the path would greet him and shift aside to clear his way. Birds and animals would speak to him and greet him from a distance, recognizing the light of Allah's grace upon him.

### **The Incident of the Mad Mare**

There was once a mare who belonged to a local villager. Over time, this mare became extremely disturbed and started behaving in a violent and unpredictable manner. She grew terrified of her own master and began living among wild animals in the forest. Her madness reached such a level that she started biting people like a rabid dog and began hunting for prey in the wilderness — a behavior completely unnatural for a mare.

The mare's owner was deeply distressed. Despite all his efforts, he could neither control nor tame the animal. Feeling helpless, he finally realized that only Hazrat Shah Syed Asrar Pak (R.A.) had the spiritual authority and grace to solve such a difficult matter. In a state of utter desperation and humility, the man approached the sacred court (*bargah*) of Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.) and explained his problem in detail. With tears in his eyes, he begged for help, saying, "*Huzoor, my mare has*

*become mad. She has left my house and is now living in the wild. No one can control her — only your grace can save her."*

After listening patiently, Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.) smiled gently and said, *"Somehow, you must call her and bring her to me. Only then can the matter be resolved."* The owner responded helplessly, *"Huzoor, I have tried everything. She has been living in the forest for so long that she no longer recognizes me or my voice. How can I possibly bring her back?"*

Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.) then said, *"Go to the forest. Call her from afar and tell her that Huzoor Asrar Pak remembers you."* The owner obeyed the order and went deep into the forest. He called out loudly, *"Mare! Huzoor Asrar Pak remembers you!"* The moment the mare heard these words, she stopped in her tracks. Her body trembled, and tears welled up in her eyes. She immediately turned around and began galloping at full speed toward Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.).

When the mare reached the presence of Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.), she fell to her knees in submission and reverence. Her behavior had completely transformed — the madness and violence were gone. She bowed her head and began to speak in clear, eloquent words, *"Huzoor, my master broke his promise three times. I gave him milk, but instead of honoring his word, he sold my calves and the milk I produced for profit. This betrayal wounded my heart and made me restless."*

She pleaded, *"Please command my master to fulfill his promise and take me home with love and care. Only then will my heart be at peace."* The mare's owner was shocked and deeply ashamed. He had never imagined that the mare's madness was a result of his own wrongdoing and broken promises.

With tears in his eyes, he fell to his knees before Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.) and said, *"Huzoor, I am guilty. I have betrayed my trust. Please forgive me and guide me."* Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.) said, *"True peace comes from honesty and keeping one's word. Fulfill your promise and honor the trust placed in you."* The man sincerely repented, promising never to break his word again. He offered a gift (*nazr*) in the sacred court as a gesture of gratitude and penance.

Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.) then gently touched the mare's forehead and said, *"Return to your master with peace and loyalty."* The mare stood up, her eyes calm and peaceful. Her madness had disappeared completely. She obediently followed her master home, and from that day onward, she never displayed any violent behavior.

The man's household prospered after that incident, and the mare became a source of blessings for him. The villagers, witnessing this miracle, were left in awe of the spiritual power and grace of Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.).

## **The Miracle of the Moving Tree and the Conversion of Hindus**

One summer, Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.) went on a polo tour with a group of his companions, including a party of Hindus who were very fond of his company and showed great respect toward him. The group traveled deep into the desert, far from the city and their residences.

As they were returning from the walk, it was afternoon. The intense summer heat was unbearable, and a strong, hot, and humid wind was blowing. The companions felt extremely thirsty, and the relentless heat began to exhaust them. In their desperation, they started searching for shade and water, but there was none in sight.

Seeing the restless and distressed state of the group, Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.) began to speak about the Day of Mahshar (the Day of Judgment). He said, *"The heat you are feeling now is nothing compared to the intensity of the heat on the Day of Mahshar. On that day, there will be no relief except for the shade of the Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings be upon him)."* While speaking, Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.) noticed a tree standing at a great distance in the desert. He said to one of his companions, *"Go and tell that tree that the beloved of Allah is calling it."*

The companion obeyed the order without hesitation. He approached the tree from afar and conveyed the message, *"O tree, Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak is calling you!"*

To everyone's astonishment, the tree suddenly uprooted itself from the ground and began running like a swift horse toward Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.). The tree arrived in his presence, stood upright, and then bowed down in reverence. In a clear and audible voice, the tree greeted him, saying, *"Peace be upon you, O Friend of Allah!"* The tree then testified, *"Islam is the true faith, and the Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings be upon him) is the true Prophet of Allah. On the Day of Mahshar, he will indeed cast his shade over his Ummah and intercede for them."*

When the group of Hindu companions witnessed this extraordinary event — a lifeless tree responding to the spiritual command of Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.) and testifying to the truth of Islam — they were overcome with awe and spiritual clarity. They immediately recited the Kalima (the declaration of faith): *"There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) is His Messenger."* They all accepted Islam on the spot, filled with newfound faith and conviction.

### **The Miracle of Relighting the Extinguished Lamp**

One night after the Isha prayer, Hazrat Shah Asrar ud Din (R.A.) was presiding over a spiritual gathering (Majlis). The

atmosphere was filled with divine light and spiritual presence, as if the sun and moon were both illuminating the assembly simultaneously. Hazrat Shah Asrar ud Din (R.A.) was speaking to his followers in a state of deep spiritual ecstasy, delivering mystical insights and amorous words of divine wisdom.

While the blessed discourse was underway, a sudden gust of wind swept through the gathering and extinguished the lamp that had been illuminating the room. The room was immediately plunged into darkness, disrupting the gathering and unsettling the attendees. Seeing the extinguished lamp, Hazrat Shah Asrar ud Din (R.A.)'s blessed countenance reflected a slight displeasure, as the spiritual light of the gathering had been interrupted.

Without any hesitation, Hazrat Shah Asrar ud Din (R.A.) leaned toward the extinguished lamp and blew on it gently. To everyone's astonishment, the lamp immediately reignited, burning even brighter than before. The flame rose high, casting a radiant light that illuminated the entire Majlis as if night had turned into day. The fragrance of the lamp's smoke was not ordinary — it released a scent akin to amber and fine incense. The entire court was filled with the sweet aroma, giving the impression that the light itself was divine.

The miraculous light did not just illuminate the physical surroundings — it carried spiritual and healing properties. A man who had been blind for a long time was present in the

Majlis. As soon as the flame relit, the divine light reflected into his eyes, and he miraculously regained his sight. He stood up, overwhelmed with gratitude, and praised the spiritual power of Hazrat Shah Asrar ud Din (R.A.). A man who had been afflicted and tormented by the influence of rebellious jinn was also present. After seeing the miraculous light, he took a piece of the blessed candle home and lit it there. As soon as the candle illuminated his house, the entire atmosphere of the house transformed. The dark presence and disturbing energy caused by the jinn vanished instantly.

The man reported that he witnessed the rebellious jinn fleeing from the light, unable to withstand its spiritual purity and divine essence. The candle that was relit by Hazrat Shah Asrar ud Din (R.A.)'s divine breath did not burn out. It continued to shine day and night, never diminishing or weakening. It became a symbol of divine blessing and spiritual authority, remaining a source of light and spiritual strength for the followers.

Light is a manifestation of divine presence (Noor-e-Haq). When faith is pure and spiritual authority is blessed by Allah, even the darkness of the night and the power of evil cannot extinguish it.

### **Enlightened the devotee's finger, shining through the ages**

A devotee would come every night after the Isha prayer to offer his salam. One winter night, it was raining heavily, with snow and strong winds. The darkness of the night troubled him



greatly. Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (RA), moved by his discomfort, showed him mercy. He recited the sacred verse "*Yahdi Allahu li Noorihi man yasha*" ("Allah guides to His light whom He wills") and blew upon his finger. Instantly, the devotee's finger was illuminated by the divine light of the verse. The darkness of the night was lifted by this radiant glow. For the rest of his life, that finger of his shahada (index finger) remained lit with that divine light. The dark night brightened like daylight, as if the sun itself was shining from his finger.

### **Grains of sand turned into jewels through the alchemy of your gaze**

A wealthy man fell into misfortune and became destitute due to the weight of his fate. Broken and helpless, he came to your court and poured out his sorrows regarding his ruined state. Your heart, filled with generosity, took pity on him. You said to him, "Go and bring some sand."

The man brought back a handful of sand. You held it in your blessed hands, looked at it with the alchemy of your divine gaze, and then returned it to him. When he opened his hands, those grains of sand were no longer ordinary—they had transformed into priceless gems under the transformative power of your gaze. That once poor man became wealthy beyond measure and lived the rest of his life in comfort and joy.

## **He saved the merchants from ruin and granted them unseen treasures**

A caravan of merchants was robbed by thieves, who took everything they had. Devastated and desperate, the merchants first approached the Raja for help, but he ignored their pleas.

Helpless and burdened with loss, they turned to the court of Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak, tears streaming down their faces.

They cried out in his presence, "O master of generosity and compassion, we are broken and helpless. Please pray for us! Our wealth has been plundered, and the king himself refuses to listen to our cries."

At that moment, only ten rupees lay on the prayer mat before Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak. He picked up the ten rupees, held them between his blessed fingers, and said, "Come forward, one by one, and take ten rupees each."

Astonished, the merchants approached him, and as they took the ten rupees, they found their hands filling with more and more.

The unseen blessing of Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak's generosity flowed like a hidden spring — they would spend thousands, yet their ten rupees would remain untouched. By the grace of Allah and the blessings of Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak, they were saved from ruin and restored to prosperity.

## **Two loaves of bread and a cup of milk fed sixty guests**

One day, around noon, sixty people arrived at the court of Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak. They were exhausted and hungry, and their faces reflected the torment of hunger. Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak turned to the keeper of the langar and said, "Prepare food for the guests at once."

The keeper went to the kitchen and found only two loaves of bread and a small amount of sugar. Distressed, he returned and informed Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak of the situation. Smiling gently, Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak instructed him, "Bring the loaves here." The loaves were brought and placed before him. He blessed them and said, "Distribute two loaves of bread and some sugar to each guest."

The keeper hesitated — how could two loaves feed sixty people? But he obeyed the order. To everyone's astonishment, the loaves did not diminish. Sixty guests were served, and yet the two loaves remained whole. Then a bowl of milk was brought forward. Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak commanded, "Give everyone milk until they are satisfied."

The bowl of milk was passed from hand to hand, yet it never emptied. Every guest ate to their fill and drank from the bowl, which remained full as though untouched. Witnessing this miracle, the guests were overwhelmed and pledged their devotion to Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak. Through his blessings, they

were granted spiritual knowledge and ascended to the highest ranks of wisdom and understanding.

### **The alchemist witnessed true alchemy**

An arrogant alchemist once appeared before Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak with a piece of gold in his hand. Bowing respectfully, he said, "O son of the Messenger of Allah, please accept this gift from me. I am a skilled alchemist and quite wealthy." His pride was evident in his voice.

At that moment, Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak held a small lump of clay in his hand, for he had been preparing to cleanse himself. Without speaking, he looked at the clay, and instantly it turned into pure gold.

The alchemist's mouth dropped open in disbelief. His heart trembled as he realized that his so-called mastery over alchemy was nothing before the true divine power granted to Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak. Humbled, he abandoned his pride and devoted himself to dhikr (remembrance of Allah).

As the alchemist prepared to leave, Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak handed him a handful of dust and said, "When you are in need, touch this dust lightly to the ground, and by the command of Allah, it will turn into pure gold." The alchemist departed with his heart filled with awe and newfound faith.

### **A man died upon hearing the praise of Divine Love — You revived him after three days**

One day, after the morning prayer, Hazrat Sayyed Asrar Pak (R.A.) was sitting in his blessed chamber when a man approached him and asked, "What is Ishq (Divine Love)?"

Hazrat Asrar Pak began to describe the essence and intensity of Ishq with such profound words that the man, overwhelmed by the sheer weight of truth and divine revelation, collapsed and died on the spot. When a person from the gathering touched his body, they discovered that even his bones had gone cold.

Hazrat Asrar Pak forbade his burial, saying, "Do not wrap him in a shroud yet." For three days, the body lay untouched in the sacred courtyard, becoming the center of attention due to its strange stillness and radiance. Light shone upon the lifeless form, and the presence of the divine was palpable.

On the third day, Hazrat Asrar Pak stood before the body and commanded with divine authority, "Qum bi idhnillah" (Rise by the command of Allah). Instantly, the man opened his eyes and sat up.

The audience was left in awe as they witnessed the divine power of Ghaus Azam (R.A.) manifesting through Hazrat Asrar Pak. The once-dead man was restored to life, his heart now burning with the true understanding of Ishq.

### **The snake bore witness to your spiritual rank**

One day, Hazrat Syedna Syed Asrar Pak (R.A.) was delivering a discourse in the Majlis on the exalted station of Maqam-e-Riza (the Station of Contentment). Suddenly, a large snake appeared and slithered toward him. Without hesitation, it coiled itself around his blessed body and pressed its mouth against his lips.

The congregation panicked, with people trying to flee in fear. But Hazrat Asrar Pak remained completely calm, continuing his discourse without the slightest trace of fear or disturbance. The snake remained motionless, wrapped around him.

When Hazrat Asrar Pak finished his statement, he gently lowered his head in sajdah (prostration). At that moment, the snake uncoiled itself and, to everyone's astonishment, it spoke: "I am an angel in the form of a snake. I was sent by Allah to test the saints of this world. Allah, the Most High, has elevated you to the station of absolute contentment. You are among the perfect friends of Allah."

The snake then vanished, and the congregation sat stunned, realizing the spiritual greatness of Hazrat Asrar Pak.

### **Rain came with your supplication**

Hazrat Asrar Pak was once walking through his courtyard, teaching his followers (Talibeen) about the concept

of Tawheed (Divine Oneness) and the hidden depths of spiritual knowledge. The gathering was immersed in the flow of divine wisdom when suddenly the weather changed. Black clouds covered the sky, lightning crackled, and heavy rain began to pour down, accompanied by fierce winds. It felt as though winter had arrived suddenly, and the gathering became restless.

Hazrat Asrar Pak raised his gaze toward the sky. Within moments, the storm ceased, the clouds parted, and the sun emerged, filling the sky with warmth and light. The weather returned to calm as if nothing had happened.

However, after that incident, the region suffered from a severe drought for six months. The earth became dry and cracked, crops withered, and famine loomed over the people.

Finally, the townspeople gathered in desperation and approached Hazrat Asrar Pak's court, crying, "Our crops have been destroyed, and we are facing ruin. Please pray to Allah for rain!"

Hazrat Asrar Pak stood before them, raised his hands toward the sky, and prayed. Instantly, clouds gathered in the sky, and a soft, merciful rain began to fall. The dry earth drank in the water, and the fields turned green once more. The people were overjoyed, and peace and prosperity returned to the land through the blessing of Hazrat Asrar Pak's prayer.

**An angel appeared in your presence and sought your prayer—sent by Hazrat Khwaja Khizr (peace be upon him)**

One day, Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) was seated in his court, surrounded by a large gathering of seekers and devotees. The court was immersed in an atmosphere of divine grace and spiritual radiance. Suddenly, something extraordinary happened.

From above, a man descended into the court—not through the door or any opening—but as if he had emerged from within the very roof itself. The roof remained perfectly intact, yet the man appeared as if the structure had become weightless and transparent beneath his presence. He descended with such grace and majesty that the gathering was left breathless.

The man's face radiated divine light, and his appearance reflected the perfection of Allah's creation. His beauty was otherworldly—beyond the limits of human description. He approached Hazrat Asrar Pak, greeted him with reverence, and humbly requested, "Please pray for me."

Without hesitation, Hazrat Asrar Pak raised his blessed hands and prayed for him. The man instantly vanished—his departure as swift as an arrow shot from a bow. He disappeared not by walking away, but as though he had been absorbed back into the unseen realm.



The gathering sat in stunned silence, overwhelmed by the miraculous event they had just witnessed. Someone from the assembly asked Hazrat Asrar Pak, "Who was this person?" Hazrat Asrar Pak smiled and addressed the gathering: "This was an angel in human form. He resides on the third heaven and constantly engages in the glorification of Allah. Due to a hidden trial, he was temporarily lowered from his exalted rank and cast upon an island in the sea. Hazrat Khwaja Khizr (peace be upon him) found him, guided him, and instructed him to seek my prayers for his restoration. I prayed for him, and Allah has reinstated him to his original rank."

Hazrat Asrar Pak then said to his followers: "I am the beloved of Allah. My status is elevated in the divine court. I am the prince of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), the light of Hasnain Karimin (Imam Hassan and Imam Hussain), and the radiance of the son of Hazrat Ghous al-Saqlain (R.A.). My devotee should never feel despair or helplessness. When you seek my intercession and pray to Allah through me, your prayer will be accepted. And in times of trouble, you will find me standing beside you."

### **Hazrat Khidr (peace be upon him) revealed the rank of Hazrat Asrar Pak's disciples**

Once, Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) was seated alone in his private chamber. From inside the room, faint voices of conversation could be heard, as though several people were speaking softly.

Hazrat Syed Bahauddin (R.A.), the father of Hazrat Asrar Pak, and Hafiz Inayatullah (R.A.) approached the room to see who was present with Hazrat Asrar Pak. After a short while, they witnessed two radiant figures leaving the chamber. But instead of using the door, they walked straight through the wall, as if the wall had become a gateway. The wall remained whole and unbroken, yet the men passed through effortlessly as if they were walking through air.

One of the men carried a box of Yemeni agate (Aqeeq), while the other held a Tasbih (prayer beads). Hazrat Syed Bahauddin (R.A.) asked Hazrat Asrar Pak, "Who were those people, and why did they come?"

Hazrat Asrar Pak replied: "If you wish to know, close your eyes and lower your head."

They obeyed his instruction. When they opened their eyes, they found themselves standing in a distant place. In front of them stood an elderly man with divine presence. He turned toward them and said, "You have guessed correctly. I am Hazrat Khidr (peace be upon him). Come quickly; there isn't much time."

They followed Hazrat Khidr (peace be upon him) deep into a forest. There, under the shade of a tree, they saw two men washing the bodies of a deceased man and woman. After preparing the bodies for burial, Hazrat Khidr (peace be upon him) led the funeral prayer, and the bodies were buried.

Hazrat Khidr (peace be upon him) then turned toward the two men holding the agate and the Tasbih and said, "Who are you?"

The men replied, "We are devoted worshippers and close brothers. These two individuals whose funeral was conducted were disciples of Hazrat Asrar Pak. Hazrat Asrar Pak had elevated them to the rank of Fard 'Individuals' (a rare and exalted spiritual status in the realm of sainthood). Their time had come, and Allah accepted Hazrat Asrar Pak's prayer for them to depart together." Hazrat Khidr (peace be upon him) then said, "Bring forward the trust given to you by Hazrat Asrar Pak." The two men handed over the Yemeni agate and the Tasbih. Hazrat Khidr (peace be upon him) told them to close their eyes. When they opened their eyes, they found themselves back in the sacred chamber of Hazrat Asrar Pak.

The mystery of Hazrat Asrar Pak's spiritual rank and the elevated status of his disciples left everyone in awe. The gathering understood that Hazrat Asrar Pak's prayers and intercession were gateways to divine elevation and eternal success.

### **Hazrat Khwaja Khizr (peace be upon him) in the Assembly of Hazrat Shah Asraruddin (R.A.)**

One day, Hazrat Shah Asraruddin (R.A.) was seated in his exalted court among a gathering of his devoted companions. The atmosphere was heavy with divine grace and spiritual

radiance. Suddenly, a dignified and majestic figure appeared in the assembly. His face shone with celestial light, and his demeanor reflected immense spiritual rank and power. He walked with quiet grace and reverence, then sat before Hazrat Shah Asraruddin (R.A.) with the utmost humility.

The person remained silent, not daring to speak a single word in the sacred presence of Hazrat Shah Asraruddin (R.A.). His eyes were lowered, his posture respectful. The gathering watched in silent awe as this mysterious guest sat with perfect etiquette.

Then, Hazrat Shah Asraruddin (R.A.) raised his blessed face toward the sky and let out a deep sigh. Suddenly, from the depths of his blessed chest, a flame of spiritual light emerged—a burning surge of divine power. The intensity of the flame was so great that a large green tree standing in the courtyard was instantly consumed by fire and reduced to ashes.

The gathering sat stunned, their hearts trembling from the manifestation of such extraordinary spiritual power. Someone from the assembly humbly asked, "Master, what is the meaning of this event?"

Hazrat Shah Asraruddin (R.A.) smiled slightly and said, "The one who sat before us with such respect and majesty was none other than Hazrat Khwaja Khizr (peace be upon him). His

presence was not ordinary—it was a sign of divine favor and recognition."

The gathering sat in awe, realizing that they had witnessed a profound meeting between two great spiritual masters—Hazrat Shah Asraruddin (R.A.) and Hazrat Khwaja Khizr (peace be upon him). The burning of the tree was not destruction—it was a symbol of purification, the annihilation of worldly veils before the overwhelming power of divine light.

### **Hazrat Asrar Pak Granted the Blessing of Hajj to a Destitute Man**

A poor and destitute man, overwhelmed with sorrow and longing, dreamed of performing the sacred pilgrimage of Hajj. His heart ached for the sight of the Kaaba and the sacred soil of Madinah. Day and night, he wept and prayed, longing for the chance to fulfill this sacred duty.

In his desperation, he approached the court of Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.) and humbly presented his grief. With tears streaming down his face, he pleaded, "Master, please grant me the blessing of Hajj. I am helpless and have no means to reach the holy land."

Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.) listened to his supplication with kindness and said, "Come to me after the Isha prayer on the night before the day of Arafah."

The man returned at the appointed time, trembling with hope and devotion. Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.) placed his blessed hand upon the man's head and instructed him to close his eyes.

When the man opened his eyes, he found himself standing in the sacred land of Makkah Sharif! He could see the Kaaba before him, shining with divine light. Overcome with joy and disbelief, he circumambulated the Kaaba, tears of gratitude flowing down his face.

After completing the rituals of Hajj, he journeyed to Madinah Sharif and visited the blessed tomb of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). He offered prayers at Masjid Nabawi and spent several days in Madinah, immersed in spiritual ecstasy.

One day, while resting under a tree in Madinah, he fell asleep. In his dream, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) appeared to him and said, "The one who sent you here is a beloved of Allah. Through his prayer, Allah granted you the blessing of Hajj."

When the man awoke, his heart was overflowing with gratitude toward Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.). He returned to Kishtwar and fell at the feet of Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.), weeping with gratitude. Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.) smiled and said, "When Allah's beloved servants pray for you, no distance is too great, and no wish is beyond reach."

## **Presence in Kishtwar and Baghdad Sharif at the Same Time**

Hazrat Syed Shah Farid-ud-Din (R.A.), a distinguished saint and scholar, narrated an astonishing incident involving Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.).

Hazrat Darwish Muhammad (R.A.) once traveled to Makkah Sharif for Hajj. After performing Hajj, he was immersed in deep spiritual contemplation when he saw a radiant figure seated in the sacred court of Baghdad Sharif. To his amazement, it was Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.)!

Hazrat Darwish Muhammad (R.A.) approached him but hesitated to speak out of awe and reverence. He lowered his head and sat silently before Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.).

Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.) smiled and said, "Do not hesitate. Speak freely."

Darwish Muhammad (R.A.) then said, "Master, I wish to understand the meaning of the verse: 'Qulna ya naaru kooni bardan wa salaman 'ala Ibrahim' (O fire, be cool and safe for Ibrahim)."

Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.) held out his blessed hand, and a flame of fire appeared upon his palm—burning brightly yet not harming his hand. He said, "Fire is created to burn. But for the lovers of Allah, fire becomes a blessing. Just as it became cool and harmless for Hazrat Ibrahim (peace be upon him), it

becomes harmless for those who walk in the light of divine love."

Darwish Muhammad (R.A.) sat in awe as the flame danced upon Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak's (R.A.) hand without causing harm. The flame then extinguished itself, leaving behind only the sweet fragrance of burning musk.

Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.) then said, "The path of divine love burns away everything impure—but for the true lovers of Allah, it becomes a source of light and coolness."

Darwish Muhammad (R.A.) fell at the feet of Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.), overwhelmed by the spiritual knowledge and divine power he had witnessed.

### **A Brahmin's Heart Turned to Islam After Witnessing Your Dignity**

A Brahmin, filled with intense hatred and jealousy toward Hazrat Shah Fariduddin (R.A.), harbored deep enmity toward Islam. His heart burned with opposition to the message of Islam, and he would not even tolerate hearing the name of Hazrat Shah Fariduddin (R.A.). Day and night, his thoughts were consumed with schemes to oppose Islam and defame Hazrat Shah Fariduddin (R.A.).

One day, fate turned against the Brahmin. He committed an offense that angered the Raja of Kishtwar. The Raja, upon



hearing of his transgression, issued a decree for his immediate capture and ordered him to be presented in the royal court. Fearing punishment, the Brahmin grew desperate.

An acquaintance of the Brahmin, who was a regular visitor to the court of Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.), advised him to seek refuge with Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.), hoping that his spiritual grace might save him from the king's wrath. Overwhelmed by fear and left with no other option, the Brahmin reluctantly entered the sacred court of Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.).

By divine coincidence, the Raja himself also arrived at the court of Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) to seek blessings. The Brahmin stood in the presence of Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.), nervous and full of pride. Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) turned his gaze toward the Brahmin and said: "Tell me, why do you oppose Islam?"

The Brahmin, with arrogance and defiance, replied: "My religion existed long before your Islam. Your Islam came after my faith. Why should I believe in something that arrived later?" One of the companions of Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) responded, "The followers of Islam will be saved from the fire of Hell, and the fire will not burn them. On the Day of Judgment, our beloved Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) will intercede for his followers and lead them to Paradise."

The Brahmin scoffed and said, "If the fire truly cannot harm you, then I will believe that Islam is the true faith and that my

disbelief is false." Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) accepted the challenge without hesitation. It was the winter season, and a large pile of firewood had been collected for the sacred hearth. Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) ordered the wood to be set ablaze. Soon, fierce flames rose toward the sky, crackling and roaring with intense heat.

Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) turned to the Brahmin and said, "O descendant of Nimrod! This is your god of fire. If fire is your truth, then enter it!"

The Brahmin stepped back, trembling. Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) smiled gently and removed his blessed robe. He wrapped the Brahmin's impure cloak within his own robe and threw it into the blazing fire. Moments later, he extended his hand into the fire and pulled out the robe.

When Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) opened the robe, the Brahmin stood in shock. The Brahmin's cloak had been completely reduced to ashes, but Hazrat Asrar Pak's blessed robe remained intact—spotless, clean, and as radiant as if it had been freshly washed. The sacred inner lining of the robe, however, was burnt away, leaving only the outer blessed garment unharmed.

The Brahmin's eyes widened in disbelief. He stammered, "You must have cast some spell on your robe—that's why my cloak burned, but yours remained untouched."

Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) smiled knowingly. Without a word, he stepped toward the raging fire.

With calm dignity, Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) walked into the heart of the blazing flames—just as Hazrat Ibrahim (A.S.) had done before the fire of Nimrod. The flames rose higher and higher, but they did not touch him. Suddenly, the fire transformed—trees, leaves, and branches sprouted from the burning wood, and the flames cooled into a lush garden of flowers.

The Brahmin stood frozen, his heart trembling. He had witnessed a divine truth beyond human explanation. Overcome with awe and realization, the Brahmin fell at the feet of Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) and said with tear-filled eyes: "Today, I have seen the truth. Islam is the light of truth, and disbelief is indeed darkness. I testify that there is no god but Allah, and Muhammad (PBUH) is His Messenger."

Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) placed his blessed hand upon the Brahmin's head and said, "Faith is not a matter of argument—it is a matter of truth. When the fire of falsehood meets the light of truth, falsehood is reduced to ashes." The Brahmin embraced Islam and became a devoted follower of Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.), his heart cleansed of hatred and his soul illuminated by the light of faith.

## **Hearing His Wife's Cry, He Brought the Missing Husband Immediately**

One day, a distressed woman, holding the hands of her small children, came crying into the sacred court of Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.). With tears streaming down her face and a trembling voice, she began to plead:

"Huzoor, my husband has been missing for a long time. He left on a journey and never returned. I don't know where he is or even if he is alive or dead. My children are young, and we are drowning in poverty. I don't know where to go or what to do. Please, Huzoor, have mercy on us and accept my prayer."

Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.) listened patiently, his blessed head lowered in deep meditation. After a moment of silent reflection, he lifted his head and asked calmly: "Do you know which city your husband was last in?" The woman, still weeping, replied: "Huzoor, I don't know anything. I only know that we are helpless and my children are starving. Have mercy on these innocent children."

Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) smiled gently and said, "Be happy—your husband is safe. He left Delhi and has reached Azimabad. At this moment, he is resting beneath the shade of a tree in the cool breeze. But if he takes even two more steps forward, he will encounter a band of thieves who will kill him and steal all his belongings."

Upon hearing this, the woman's cries grew louder. Her heart trembled with fear and hope. Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) raised his blessed hand and said: "Go home quickly. Your husband has already reached home. Bring him to me immediately." The woman, still overwhelmed by grief and disbelief, hurried home with her children. As she approached her house, her eyes widened in astonishment—her husband was standing at the doorway, looking confused and tearful.

The moment he saw his wife and children, he began to cry uncontrollably. His neighbors gathered, surprised by his sudden appearance and distressed state. Someone asked him what had happened. Still shaken, he began to speak: "I left Delhi for Azimabad. After traveling for three days, I grew tired and sat under the shade of a tree to rest. Suddenly, I lost consciousness. When I opened my eyes, I was standing at my doorstep. I don't understand what happened—was it a dream or reality?"

His wife, still in shock, replied: "It's real. This is the grace of Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.). I had just presented my plea before him, and by his blessed grace, you have been saved." The husband and wife, still in awe of the miraculous event, immediately returned to the court of Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.). Overcome with gratitude, they fell at his feet and vowed to remain forever devoted to his sacred presence.

The man, whose name was Khwaja Jahar, became a humble servant of the court. He dedicated his life to the service of

Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.), regularly cleaning the sacred court as an expression of eternal gratitude for the miracle that saved his life and reunited his family.

### **Khwaja Hasan's Family Members Were Freed from Imprisonment**

Khwaja Hasan, also known as Kaleem, was a prominent figure and an important official in the court of the Nawab of Kashmir. For reasons unknown, the Nawab became angry with him. Fearing the Nawab's wrath, Khwaja Hasan fled from Kashmir and sought refuge in Kishtwar. However, his heart remained restless, burdened by the thought that his family had been imprisoned by the Nawab as a consequence of his actions.

Consumed by grief and helplessness, Khwaja Hasan came to the sacred court of Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.), his face drenched in tears. Falling at the feet of Hazrat Asrar Pak, he pleaded: "Huzoor, I am helpless and broken. My family is imprisoned by the Nawab of Kashmir. Please have mercy on me and free my loved ones from this torment."

Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.), hearing this heartfelt plea, responded calmly and compassionately: "A prayer will be offered." Khwaja Hasan's heart was momentarily comforted by these words. He spent the rest of the day in anxious anticipation, waiting for the prayer to be answered.

The next day, Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) performed a special supplication after kissing the blessed ground, seeking the divine mercy of Allah. As he prayed, the river of divine grace overflowed—the cries of the beggars and the oppressed seemed to rise to the heavens. Then Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) said: "Go home. Your family and friends will reach your house tonight." Khwaja Hasan rushed home, his heart pounding with hope and disbelief. He prepared food and waited anxiously, his eyes fixed on the door. As the night deepened, his restlessness increased. Unable to bear the suspense, he lit a candle and stepped outside.

What he saw next left him in stunned amazement. His family members were approaching him—still bound in chains and shackles. Overcome with emotion, Khwaja Hasan ran toward them, tears streaming down his face. He gathered them and immediately presented them before Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.) in the sacred court.

At that moment, Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) was preparing for tahajjud (the pre-dawn prayer). Witnessing this miracle, the atmosphere in the court turned to one of profound awe and gratitude. The attendants and disciples in the gathering began praising Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) and extolling the divine mercy that had unfolded before their eyes.

Khwaja Hasan's family members, still in shock, described what had happened: "While we were imprisoned, a figure of radiant beauty suddenly appeared in the darkness of the night. His face

shone with such brilliance that even the moon and the sun seemed pale in comparison. Without speaking a word, he reached into the prison, and a door opened where none had been before. He led us out, and after just a few steps, a powerful gust of wind carried us through the night—and now we are standing here. Upon seeing Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.), we realized that it was his blessed face we had seen in the prison."

The miracle left everyone speechless. The chains that had bound them were no longer a mark of captivity but a testament to the extraordinary grace of Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.).

### **Being Enriched by Khwaja Siddique Kalam**

Khwaja Siddique was a well-known and successful trader of his time. On one occasion, he traveled to India with his trading goods and made a significant profit from his business ventures. Satisfied with his earnings, he began his return journey. However, misfortune struck when bandits ambushed his convoy, looting all his goods and leaving him destitute. Khwaja Siddique arrived in Kishtwar, broken and desperate, weighed down by heavy debts and the burden of financial ruin.

In his state of despair, he approached the sacred court of Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.) and narrated his plight with tears in his eyes: "Huzoor, I am ruined. The bandits have stolen everything I owned. I am drowning in debt, and I see no way out of this misery. Please help me."



Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) listened calmly and reassured him: "Do not worry. I will pray for you." Khwaja Siddique returned home, hopeful yet anxious. After a day had passed without any change in his situation, he appeared in the sacred court once again, this time even more distressed. Falling at Hazrat Asrar Pak's feet, he cried out: "Huzoor, please have mercy on me. My burden is too heavy to bear." Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) raised his blessed head and said: "Go home. From tomorrow onward, you will find eleven rupees under your pillow every day. This is your provision from the Almighty."

Khwaja Siddique followed the instructions faithfully. The next morning, to his astonishment, he found eleven rupees under his pillow. This blessing continued daily without interruption. Over time, Khwaja Siddique regained his financial strength and became wealthy once more. His fortune was restored, and he became known for his generosity and charitable deeds toward others. One day, he returned to the sacred court, humbled and grateful: "Huzoor, I am blessed beyond measure. But I fear that my children may quarrel and become enemies over this wealth after my death." Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) smiled and said: "Do not worry. Your children will live in harmony and remain united."

Khwaja Siddique's heart was at peace. He lived the rest of his life in prosperity and contentment, enriched not only materially but also spiritually by the grace of Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak (R.A.).

### **A Person Blessed by Hazrat Asrar Pak**

A man was preparing to embark on a long journey. Before departing, he sought the permission and blessings of Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.). Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) gave him permission and blessed him.

During his journey, whenever he felt hungry or thirsty, he would reach into his pocket and find an apple there. After eating the apple, another apple would miraculously appear in his pocket. This blessing continued throughout his journey, ensuring that he never went hungry or thirsty.

One day, however, the man encountered a disbeliever and, out of kindness, offered the apple to him. From that moment, the apple ceased to appear in his pocket. The divine blessing had been lifted. This experience left him in awe of the miraculous grace of Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.).

### **Asrar Pak's Goat Killed the Lion**

One day, Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) was sitting with his disciples when one of his goats was tied up in the courtyard. Suddenly, a lion approached, threatening to attack the goat. Alarmed, one of the disciples shouted in fear.

Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) calmly looked out of the window and saw the lion preparing to pounce. He immediately recited the

sacred verse: "Thumma amatahu fa-aqbarahu." (*Then He caused him to die and laid him in a grave.*)

The lion fell lifeless to the ground upon hearing the sacred verse. Then, Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) recited another verse: "Alam nashrah laka sadrak." (*Did We not expand for you your breast?*)

By the power of these sacred words, the lion came back to life. But instead of attacking, the lion humbly bowed at the feet of Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.), showing submission and loyalty. The lion began to circle around him in devotion, dragging its belly and tail on the ground as a sign of humility and servitude. From that day forward, the lion became a regular presence in the sacred court of Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.).

### **Your Pigeon Killed the King's Falcon**

One day, Hazrat Asrar Pak's pigeons were sitting peacefully when the king's falcon spotted them. The falcon swooped down and attacked one of the pigeons, killing it.

Seeing this, Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) became displeased. At once, one of his pigeons flew toward the falcon and began to attack it ferociously. The pigeon struck the falcon with its beak, wounding it and making it bleed. The pigeon then gouged out the falcon's eyes and ultimately killed it.

The king appeared before Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) to seek forgiveness, saying: "Huzoor, I have wronged you. Please forgive me." Hazrat Asrar Pak (R.A.) calmly replied: "Indeed, Allah is supreme over all mighty."

### **Deliverance from Epidemic**

You were like the shining moon of pure mysticism and belief. At the age of seventeen, your beauty radiated like the full moon on the fourteenth night. In your deep love for the Divine, you distanced yourself from worldly ties and sought seclusion, as if the sun of guidance had settled within your very being. The light of God illuminated your vision.

During the days of your seclusion, a devastating epidemic broke out in Kishtwar, claiming countless lives daily. The streets and markets were filled with the sick and dying, and the air was heavy with cries of anguish. The city was gripped by fear and despair. The Raja, overwhelmed and trembling, approached Hazrat Shah Farid ud-Din in desperation. With tears in his eyes, he begged Hazrat Shah Farid ud-Din to intercede and prayed for deliverance from this deadly plague, saying, "We have no refuge except your court in this time of great distress. Our city is on the brink of ruin—please pray that Allah bestows His mercy upon us and spares us from this calamity."

Hazrat Shah Farid ud-Din, moved by the suffering of the people and the Raja's heartfelt plea, said, "Go to Hazrat Asrar Pak and

relay the entire situation to him." Following this command, the Raja went to the hijra khas (private chamber) of Hazrat Asrar Pak and stood in silence outside the closed door. From within the room, he could hear the sacred names "Ya Hayyu, Ya Qayyum" (O Ever-Living, O Sustainer) being invoked with deep devotion. Then, Hazrat Asrar Pak prayed, "O Lord, grant peace and security to this land where Your sacred name is mentioned."

Upon hearing this prayer, the Raja returned to the city, only to find that miraculous news was spreading rapidly. Those who had been shrouded and prepared for burial suddenly came back to life and sat up. Those on the verge of death were restored to full health by the blessing of your prayer. The disease vanished from the city, and the people were cured. Gratitude and joy swept through the land, and the Raja proclaimed that Allah and His Messenger were pleased with you.

You explained that Allah's wisdom in life and death is profound, and even the Messenger of Allah is pleased with the divine decree. To calm those who had been revived and to deepen their spiritual understanding, you offered them a cup of water, blessing them with divine insight (Irfan).

Immersed in the manifestation of the Divine Self, you were overcome with spiritual ecstasy. You covered your face with your cloak and entered a deep spiritual state. Hazrat Bahauddin,

witnessing your condition, was distressed and began to wail. But you forbade him from grieving.

No one dared to bathe or shroud your body. Hazrat Shah Farid ud-Din, deeply concerned, sat in the Bahr Anwar Uhud (Ocean of Divine Light) and awaited divine guidance. On the third day, a breeze from the unseen realm swept through the room, filling it with an indescribable spiritual presence.

Hazrat Shah Farid ud-Din then entered the room and lifted Hazrat Asrar Pak's lifeless body into his lap. He carried him around the room and finally stood still, holding him to his chest. Speaking to the lifeless body, he said, "O my Yusuf, do not grieve me like Ya'qub (Jacob). Bring joy to my heart and open your eyes to fulfill my dreams. Your life is life for me, and your death is also life for you."

At that moment, Hazrat Asrar Pak opened his eyes as though waking from a deep sleep. He gazed at his father, and Hazrat Shah Farid ud-Din gently expressed his longing. Words flowed from Hazrat Asrar Pak's mouth like pearls, as he said, "Why did you call me back from the realm of divine unity (Qurb Wahdat)?"

Hazrat Shah Farid ud-Din replied, "O son, be content with Allah's command. For you, life and death are the same in this world and the hereafter. You are a guide for the misguided, and a source of light for the seekers." Hazrat Asrar Pak accepted this

divine decree with peace, and from that moment, countless blessings and guidance flowed through his lineage.

### **History of Wasal (Union) and Urs Sharif (Sacred Passing)**

Until the 25th of Shaban 1321 AH, Hazrat Shah Asrar Pak was in a state of intense spiritual connection and contemplation. On the 25th day, he prayed for his departure from this world, foreseeing that the gardens of Jannat (Paradise) were being prepared for his arrival. Hazrat Rizwan (the gatekeeper of Paradise) was decorating the heavenly abode, and the Hoor (heavenly maidens) and Ghulaman (heavenly servants) were preparing the eighth heaven with great honour and splendour.

In this state of divine awareness, Hazrat Asrar Pak held a Majlis Pak (sacred gathering) in honour of Hazrat Ali. During this gathering, you gave seventy profound explanations of Tawheed (Oneness of Allah) and Irfan (Divine Knowledge), which left the listeners spiritually intoxicated. You also delivered a remarkable discourse on the mysteries of death and eternal survival.

While this spiritual enlightenment was unfolding, a heavenly voice was heard proclaiming secret knowledge. The sound of "Arja'i" (Return to Your Lord) began to echo through the gathering, and the listeners themselves heard this divine message. Hazrat Asrar Pak then declared, "This is a command

from Allah. The time of Hijr (separation) has now ended, and the time to return has arrived."

Upon hearing this news, Hazrat Shah Farid ud-Din was deeply distressed. A flood of divine light and hidden mysteries descended upon the atmosphere. Hazrat Shah Farid ud-Din then took Hazrat Asrar Pak into his blessed arms, covered his radiant face with his sacred robe, and Hazrat Asrar Pak returned to his Lord.

A wave of grief swept through the household. Mournful cries echoed in the air, and people tore their clothes in sorrow. Hazrat Shah Farid ud-Din consoled them, saying: *"Why are you crying? The beloved of God does not die. They merely pass from one realm to another. Hazrat Asrar Pak is a part of our very soul—his life and death are equally sacred."*

To demonstrate Hazrat Asrar Pak's spiritual perfection, Hazrat Shah pointed to a dry tree in the courtyard. Hazrat Asrar Pak touched the tree with his blessed hand, and it immediately turned green and flourished, bearing leaves and blossoms even in autumn. However, after his passing, the same tree withered and dried up as though grieving his separation. The tree seemed to weep at the loss of Hazrat Asrar Pak. Seeing this, Hazrat Shah ordered the tree to be cut down and made into a board for preparing the sacred coffin.



When the time came for bathing the sacred body, Hazrat Asrar Pak was wearing a beautiful robe, which was gently removed. Within the robe was a 'postin' (fur garment) that had been bestowed upon him spiritually by the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him). As the sacred garment was removed from his body, it bore the sacred inscription: *"By the grace of Allah, the beloved dies in the love of Allah."* After the sacred bathing, the same robe gifted by the Holy Prophet was placed upon his blessed body. A shroud was wrapped over him, and his sacred body was placed in the coffin.

When the funeral was brought to the courtyard, a miraculous sight appeared. Seven angels of heaven descended in the form of animals, dressed in green and white, flying in perfect ranks through the air. They spread their wings and began to recite eulogies in loud voices. The jinn and heavenly beings from the earth and sky also gathered for the sacred funeral.

Suddenly, a mysterious group of men with radiant white beards appeared from the unseen realm. Their presence was so powerful and awe-inspiring that no one dared to approach them or speak to them. Hazrat Shah Farid ud-Din led the funeral prayer with a deep and reverent heart. After the prayer, he addressed the gathering, saying:

*"Take the sacred coffin to Kashmir. Wherever Hazrat Asrar Pak's blessed spirit desires to rest, that will be the place of his final burial."*

As the funeral procession reached Chogan, the coffin suddenly became extremely heavy, and the bearers were unable to carry it further. A voice from the unseen realm declared: *"This is the resting place of the beloved of Allah. This is the sacred ground where Hazrat Asrar Pak shall be buried."*

Kishtwar was honoured and blessed to be named Baghdad Thani (II) due to this divine command and the sacred burial of Hazrat Asrar Pak. By the command of Allah, Hazrat Asrar Pak's sacred body was lowered into the prepared grave.

A white bird that had been spiritually connected to Hazrat Asrar Pak also descended into the grave and vanished. The sacred grave was then sealed and blessed with divine light.

Before Hazrat Asrar Pak's sacred burial, the land of Chogan was troubled by jinn and serpents who would disturb the people. It was said that if two people walked through Chogan at night, one of them would disappear due to the dominance of these jinn. However, after the sacred burial of Hazrat Asrar Pak, the jinn were driven away, and peace was restored to the land.

Thus, Hazrat Asrar Pak's earthly journey ended, but his spiritual legacy and divine blessings continue to illuminate hearts and guide countless souls on the path of truth and divine love.

## منقبت بہ دربار حضرت شاہ اسرار الدین قادری بعدادی

از سگ درگاہ شاہ اسرار حقر العباد فقیر مرزا جہاں زیب قادری بیگ عفی عنہ

اے جان جاں آرام دل بیقرار من	حضرت سرور و سلطان یا شاہ اسرار پاک
آنکھ نے میری نہ دیکھا اے حسین تم سا کوئی	بر زمان ثانی یوسف یا شاہ اسرار پاک
رمز وحدت و احدیت ارواح و امثال او	سر تو برزخ شود در این مراتب راز تو
مظہر شان الہی جلوہ نور خدا	سرور اہل حقیقت یا شاہ اسرار پاک
گر پڑوں کی دستگیری کا کوئی سامان ہو	عاشقوں کے درد دل کا آپ ہی درمان ہو
سالکان راہ و صلت آپ سے پاتے ہیں فیض	منع جود و عنایت یا شاہ اسرار پاک
بے کیا حق نے مقرر آپ کو حاجت روا	جس نے لب سے جو نکالا اس کو وہ سب مل گیا
کیا عجب لطف و عنایت کی نظر ہم پر بھی ہو	ہو میری مشکل کشائی یا شاہ اسرار پاک
آپ کی چوکھٹ سے خالی کون ہے اب تک گیا	آپ کو جس نے پکارا جھولیاں بھر کر گیا
گم ہانٹی حکم عالیشان سے عیسیٰ نفس	میرا مردہ دل جلا دو یا شاہ اسرار پاک
ہوگی ثابت فضیلت آپ کی اس بات سے	اعلیٰ حضرت شاہ فرید الدین نے فرما دیا
زندگی اور موت ہے اک مثل خاطر آپ کے	جلوہ شان اسم باقی یا شاہ اسرار پاک
جس جگہ چاہیں یہ رہنا بس وہیں دربار ہے	سرزمین کشتواڑ پہ آپ کی سرکار ہے
ہو گیا بغداد ثانی آپ کے ہونے سے شہر	وارث میراث میران یا شاہ اسرار پاک
آپ تاج اولیاء ہیں مظہر ظل اللہ	آپ کا دیدار مانند دید جلوہ کبریا
سب جگر گوشوں کو اپنے ساتھ رکھا آپ کو	دے دیا دربار عالی یا شاہ اسرار پاک
وہ نظر جس نے کیا نسلوں کو روشن نور سے	بر ادا جس کی ہے مظہر جلوہ دید طور کے
اور قسم کھاتے ہنود اب تک ہیں جن کے ظہور کے	شمس تابان بر طریقہ یا شاہ اسرار پاک
یا شاہ اسرار جان و دل فدا ہوں آپ پر	ہیں مناقب آپ کے الفاظ سے بالا و تر
ہیں کیے حق نے مقرر آپ کی مدح کی خاطر	جہاں زیب کے قلم و زبان یا شاہ اسرار پاک

## About the Author

Mirza Jahanzeb Beg is a distinguished psychologist and author, widely recognized for his expertise in human behaviour and mental health disorders. He currently serves as an Assistant Professor of Psychology at KCLAS, Coimbatore. His book, *The Mind and Machine: An Introduction to Artificial Intelligence*, delves into the complex intersection of artificial intelligence, human cognition, psychology, and robotics, positioning him as a leading voice at the crossroads of technology and mental health.

Mirza holds a Doctorate in Psychology and a Master of Science in Clinical Psychology, where he graduated as a Gold Medallist. He has also received advanced training in diplomacy, human rights, international law, and United Nations mechanisms from the Department of Law at the University of New South Wales, Sydney. His deep understanding of global affairs has led him to engage with several international organizations, where he has delivered insightful addresses on South Asia's geopolitical landscape at prestigious international forums.

As the former Director of YoungDiplomats, a global think tank focused on geopolitics, diplomacy, and international relations in the Asia-Pacific region, Mirza has played a pivotal role in shaping strategic conversations. His expertise has been recognized globally—he was recently featured on Radio

Germany as a scientific authority on the role of artificial intelligence in mental health.

Mirza's academic contributions include dozens of peer-reviewed research papers published in leading scientific journals indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, and PubMed. He also regularly contributes to scholarly publications, magazines, and newspapers, further solidifying his reputation as a thought leader in psychology and AI.

In 2018, Mirza was honoured as an *Ambassador of Peace* by the Institute of Peace and Development, a European Union-based think tank, for his outstanding contributions to peace and diplomacy. He was also awarded honorary lifetime membership to *Dabistan-e-Iqbal* by the family of Sir Allama Mohammad Iqbal, recognizing his remarkable work in Iqbal Studies, mental and spiritual health, Sufism, and social service—making him the first Indian to receive this prestigious distinction.

Beyond his professional achievements, Mirza's intellectual curiosity extends to poetry, Sufi music, philosophy, history, cosmology, astrophysics, and geopolitics. He remains deeply committed to behavioural research and the advancement of knowledge in mental health, artificial intelligence, Iqbal Studies, Sufism, philosophy, and contemporary science. His multidisciplinary expertise and global recognition underscore his influence as both a scholar and a thought leader in his field.

## Notes

This book tells the story of the Mirza Beg clan of the Mughal Dynasty. The Mughals, who were ethnic Turco-Mongol and descendants of Timur, or Tamerlane, came originally from Central Asia. They established the Mughal empire in India which lasted from 1526 to 1857, introducing many aspects of Persian culture into India, for example literature, painting, and architecture. Under the Great Mughal Emperors, the Mughals experienced expansion and prosperity. When the Mughals extended their reign to Jammu and Kashmir, some prominent Mughal families migrated to Jammu and Kashmir from Delhi and permanently settled in various parts of the region. The Mirza Beg clan of Udhyanpur was one such family that settled in the Udhyanpur region of the Chenab Valley, which was a famous and beautiful pass en route to Kishtwar, owing to its strategic location and picturesque beauty. The Timurid Legacy: A brief history of the Timurid Turco-Mongol Clan of Udhyanpur is written in an accessible style that should appeal to historians, academics, and non-academicians alike. Untold stories, historical facts, and detailed family trees and lineages of many families living in the region should help the reader navigate through the glorious past of this influential Turco-Mongol Clan of Udhyanpur.

